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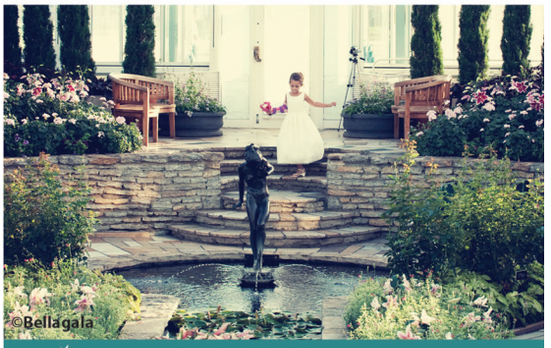


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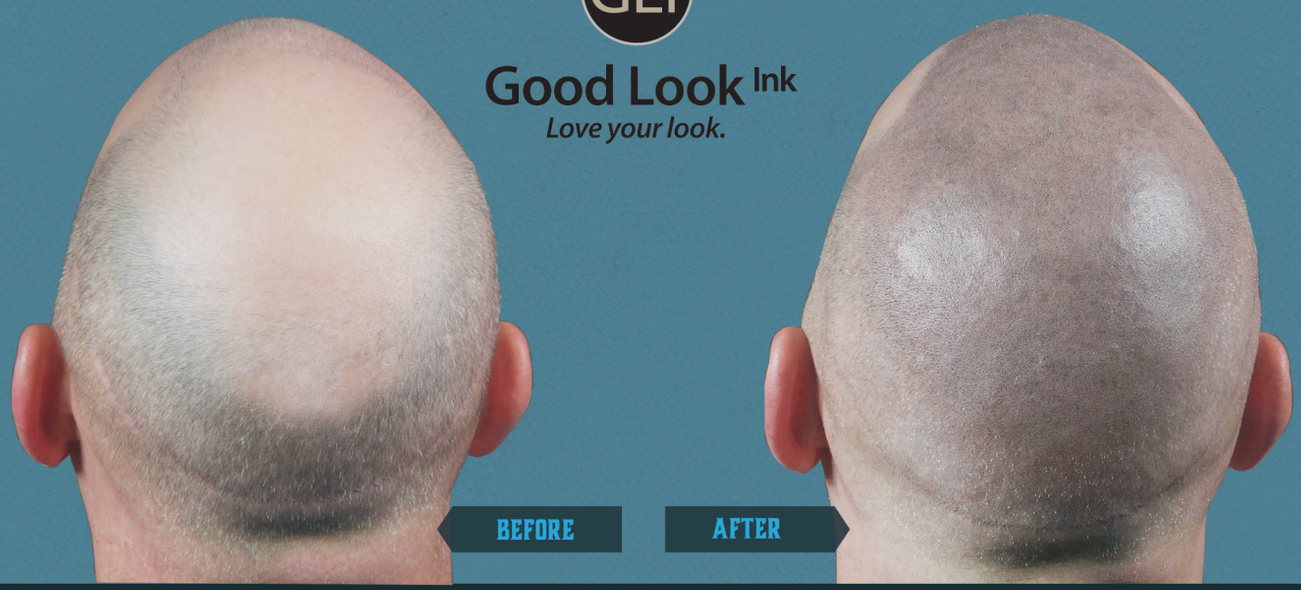
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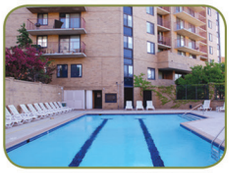
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FROM THE EDITOR | BY ANDY LIEN

Wedding Style: No Holds Barred

I was working from home yesterday and decided my dress code would be a flouncy floor-length dress with a blush liner and white georgette overlay. I threw my hair up in a top knot, skipped the makeup, and traipsed around my loft as I edited and approved pages of this issue. The whole thing was very regal, in a casual and sporty way. The dress had just arrived from India from eShakti, a company that gives options to customize with our measurements and preferences, for pretty stinking cheap. I tell you, I'd buy local, if locals could do this for me. For $40. My weight and size make that a hefty challenge, but I was as light as air in that dress. I felt pretty and witty and gay. I was like Maria in *West Side Story*, but without the murder. What an absolute delight for a Thursday.

I'm not going to go so far as to say that I felt like I was in costume; costume implies that I departed from my usual sense of self. Instead, I was finding a new side of me that embraces white and pastel, airy and feminine. Considering that my normal uniform is black with black on black with pants, what is comfortable trends toward what the Sharks would wear in *West Side Story*, not what Maria or Anita would sell in their dress shop. But, just as our personalities are fluid, so can be our styles. What is said over and over by the fashion authorities in this issue is how there may be certain cues to pick up on when dressing for weddings, but what's most important is that all of us feel comfortable and authentic in what we wear (p. 36). Let's do that every day.

I bring up costumes because it's remarkable to me how many options we have today for what we'd like to wear. When I was a young kid in the late '70s and early '80s, it seemed like costumes were prohibitively expensive. I mean, we wore just the face instead of the whole mask. It was half of a head, literally. I had a Wonder Woman mask that included a facade of a face with black hair to go with my Underoos; today, we can get a wig and makeup with a whole corseted spangly getup for probably the same amount of money. We can be Wonder Woman instead of just dressing up as her. What's more, today we can put our own spin on Wonder Woman. Wig or no. Makeup or no. Corset or no. And I'll probably wear the sensible red-and-gold shoes instead of the boots.

Oh, I loved to dress up. I yearned for those awful hard-plastic toy high heels that hung in their packages in the toy section and made sounds like fingernails on a chalkboard when scraped along the floor on little, klutzy feet. I could dress up as a cop or a cowboy or a witch or a model or one of Charlie's Angels (I had the Kate Jackson doll). I hit a snag when my brother cut off all my flaxen locks and hid them under the sofa with Mom's "good" scissors, the Fiskars, and I became a boyish little Diana Prince with a scabby chin. But, no matter. Once I spun around and around, I was that Amazon princess with the golden Lasso of Truth and invisible jet. Or I'd punch you if you said otherwise.

And then my feet and I grew and could no longer fit into the shoes and clothes that girls my age wore, costumes or not. Pictures show that I was literally two-to-three times bigger than my counterparts. I was becoming a large, Nordic woman...early. I couldn't shop where they shopped, I couldn't wear what they wore, I couldn't giggle like them. It was too contrived. I was too different. I stopped being interested in style. And that was the rest of my childhood. In that time, I lost the style wanderlust and gained inhibitions. Rules. Polarities. What's within the accepted norm, what's on the fringes, and what is unacceptable. I couldn't see myself getting married. I couldn't even envision what I could wear, thanks to the rules.

As we think about today, 2015, when rules are being rewritten to include the rainbow community in legal marriage, such changes also extend to style. What was once unacceptable is now legal across the nation. Weddings don't need to be (but can be) the political statements that some have been in recent (and not so recent) years. The ceremonies and celebrations can be exactly what you and your beloved want them to be. Rainbows and pink triangles and lavender accents are optional. You can do what you want.

When I search the internet for specific magazine wedding issues for this community, I come up with ours and a handful of digital-only specials. Where does this community go for answers? Four years ago, when we started pulling together issues dedicated solely to being Wedding Issues, I had so many questions. I asked the style experts about the rules. Do grooms tend to match? Should brides avoid similar dresses? What happens with rings? Eight dedicated issues and over 800 pages of weddings and wedding-related content for this rainbow community later, there still aren't really any hard and fast answers. Guess what don't really exist? Rules.

It's as if by working outside the rules, this community avoided a lot of them. Sure, we can say that there's always the chance of heteronormativity sneaking in and what are gay weddings seem straight, but that's part of not having rules. Go for it. Do what you want. Maybe there won't be such a thing as heteronormativity in the future and weddings will just be weddings. Have the day of your dreams. Be authentic. Make your bow ties out of your parents' wedding garb, as can be done by The Bow Tie Shoppe (p. 46). Get custom rings like those designed by George and Rony (p. 48) or have some rebar made into circles or get tattoo rings. I've seen it all. And it is all valid and binding and symbolic and beautiful.

When my day comes, if it comes, I might show up to the tune of "I Feel Pretty" in a white flouncy dress ordered off the internet or from the gals selling the dresses to curvy brides (p. 42), or I might just rope my betrothed with my golden Lasso of Truth while sporting a scab on my chin. However it goes, it will be what's right for me. For us. The world is more open than ever before, for anyone, regardless of who we are, what we look like, who we marry, when we marry, and if we marry.

Whatever we do, let's do it in our own authentic style.
With you and with thanks,
Andy ■





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A WORD IN EDGEWISE | BY E.B. BOATNER

Synecdoche/Metonymy — More Than Figures of Speech

"Synecdoche," according to Wikipedia, is "a rhetorical trope similar to metonymy — a figure of speech in which a term that denotes one thing is used to refer to a related thing." Something, basically, that substitutes the part for the whole: "crown" for "king," "flag" for "country," and so on.

All this is by way of getting to our current flag question, i.e., whether to remove all forms of the Confederate flag, as happened on the South Carolina Capitol grounds, from other locations. But what "other locations"? And and what does "flag" mean to different people?

In 1862 American composer George Frederick Root wrote *Battle Cry of Freedom*, a patriotic song for the Union cause. The tune was so popular that a version was adapted for the Confederacy.

While the Blues sang:

The Union forever! Hurrah, boys, hurrah!

Down with the traitors, up with the stars; While we rally round the flag, boys, we rally once again, Shouting the battle cry of freedom!

The Grays chanted:

Our Dixie forever! She's never at a loss!

Down with the eagle and up with the cross We'll rally 'round the bonny flag, we'll rally once again, Shout, shout the battle cry of Freedom!

There's a movement to remove all Confederate flag images, and a counter-movement of outraged folk citing "heritage," marching in robes and hoods, flaunting the Stars and Bars at a presidential motorcade, and, until recently, ordering it printed on specialty license plates in Texas. Lee Rowland, speaking for the ACLU in a July 22 *Washington Post* article, made an excellent distinction between South Carolina's move and a recent decision by the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles to deny Confederate flag images.

South Carolina legislators, Rowland wrote, realized it was time to change, and voted a policy change to lower the flag, while in the license plate issue, Texas violated the First Amendment rights of individuals to express their opinion.

Far from being hypocritical, said Rowland, the ACLU, who had urged the removal of the South Carolina flag, fights to keep all citizens constitutionally protected, even for issues with which they don't agree, believing that stifling private speech at whatever level is a constitutional failure.

Nobody said democracy would be easy, any more than is parsing figures of speech. ■



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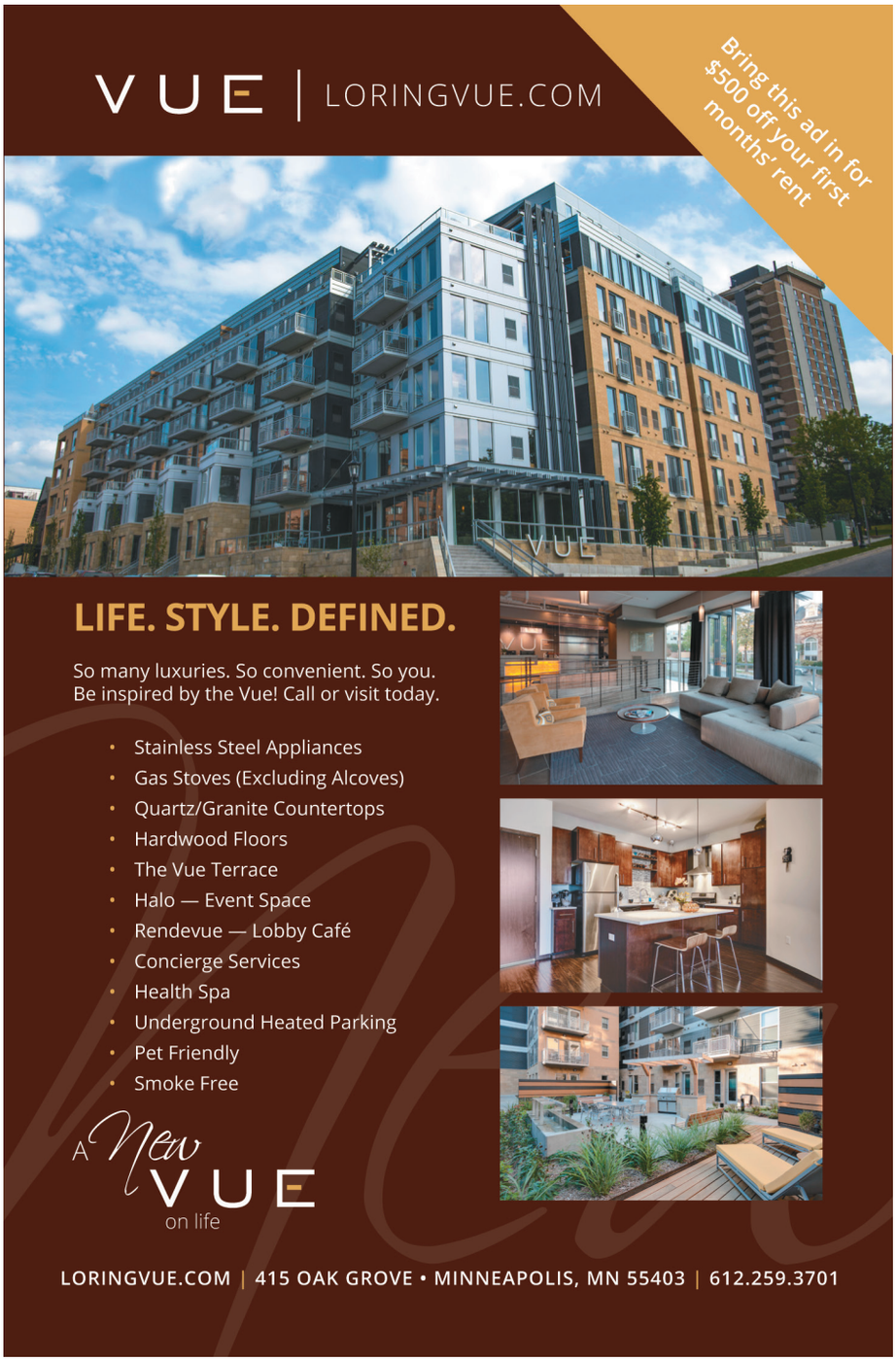












RED RIBBON RIDE CLOSING CEREMONY

JULY 19, 2015


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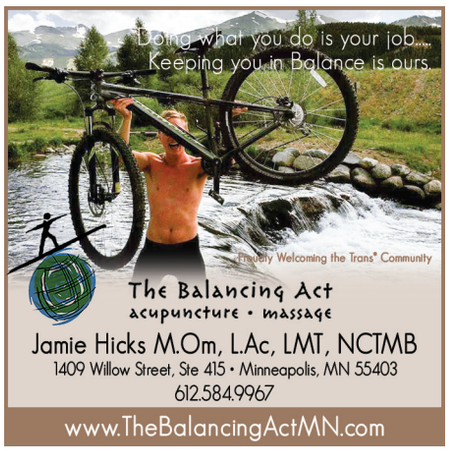
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August 15 • 10 a.m.
Welch Mill Canoeing & Tubing
26389 County 7 Blvd., Welch
The Minneapolis Movie Bears and the North Country Bears are getting together again for another big day of tubing down the Cannon River, but you don't have to be a bear, cub, or otter to join in the fun. Tubes are $10 each. After tubing, many in the group will be going to Treasure Island Resort & Casino for the buffet or hitting a hamburger joint on the way back. Visit www.minneapolismoviebears.com or www.ncbears.com for more information.

BEAR BAR NIGHT
August 22 • 8–11 p.m.
Bolt Underground
515 Washington Ave. S., Minneapolis
Join the North Country Bears for their monthly Bear Bar Night in the Bolt Underground. $7 gets you a cup for keg beer, pop, and a whole lot of burly bears. Grrr. And if you need something to gnaw on, the eagleBOLTbar offers pizza, sandwiches, burgers, and other munchies. Visit www.eagleboltbar.com for more information.

LET'S DO LUNCH
August 28 • 11:30 a.m.–2 p.m.
Little Brothers – Friends of the Elderly
1845 E. Lake St., Minneapolis
An exciting new monthly lunch event has begun for GLBT seniors. The cost is free, and includes a relaxed and healthy lunch, fabulous dessert, and great conversation. Come for the food and stay for the company. It's a great opportunity to be yourself and make new friends in a warm, accepting and welcoming atmosphere. While you're there, you can get info about senior care options and GLBT services. Space is limited so call ahead.

NORTH COUNTRY BEARS DRIVE-IN & PIG OUT
August 29 • 5:30 p.m.
Vali-Hi Drive-In
11260 Hudson Blvd. N., Lake Elmo
Join the North Country Bears for a barbecue tailgate affair at Vali-Hi Drive In. They'll have barbecue and all the fixin's before the sun goes down and the movies start. All you'll need to bring is your beverage of choice. Have your car in line at Vali-Hi by 5:30 p.m. to ensure you get to enter the theater grounds and get parked with the group. Tickets are $8.50 for all three movies, if you can make it that long! Search "North Country Bears Drive-in & Pig Out" on Facebook for more info. ■

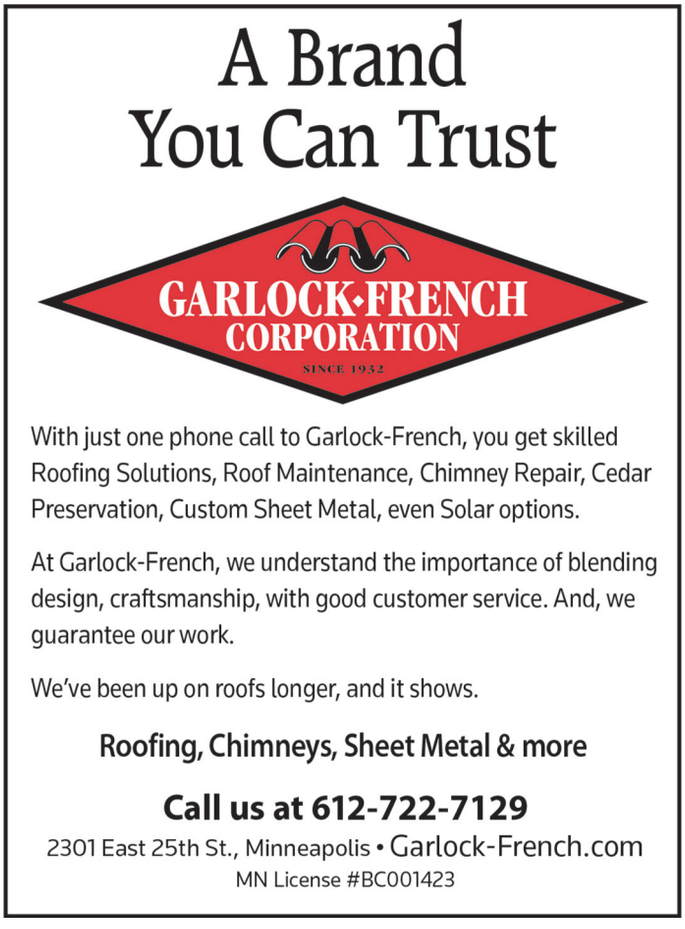

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FOOD & DINING | BY JOY SUMMERS | PHOTOS BY JOY SUMMERS



Laurel Elm sets up for service.

Saint Dinette

The concrete walls and floors stay cool to the touch, even on the hottest day. A section of corrugated tin shields the bar. Windows line the walls, allowing for light to play across the mod white chairs while the staff minds every table. There's a clink of glassware and a steady, low hum of active conversation. The greetings are immediate and a table is quickly procured. This is Saint Dinette and it has been a long time coming.

Tim Niver and J.D. Fratzke have worked tirelessly to create this Lowertown St. Paul corner spot where the neighborhood can gather and share a meal. The vibe is elegant enough for a special occasion, but not so stuffy that regulars can't pull up a barstool and hang every other night of the week. The name came, in part, from the memory of a dinette table, that cozy nook inside an eat-in kitchen where Mom would serve eggs just the way you liked them. It has been well over two years that they sought just the right location for this restaurant dream. Along the way they gathered friends and believers in the dream, including Laurel Elm and Adam Eaton.

Elm is an experienced front-of-house whiz, having joined the project after a run as a general manager at La Belle Vie. In addition to being a gracious, easy-going host (not unlike Niver, who's a legend in the industry for unpretentious hospitality), she's skilled with a cocktail shaker. The drink of the summer is her creation, the Watermelon Shrub. The drink is as gentle on the palate as a summer breeze, tart and sassy as Blanche Devereaux, and everything worth sipping on a daily basis. The balancing act of spirit, fruit, and basil perfume is just dry enough to go down smooth and clean, one after another. It's enough to envy those who live in the Rayette Lofts above the space.

In the kitchen is Adam Eaton, creator of the greatest bologna sandwich of all time. Eaton and Elm had worked together at La Belle Vie. It was Elm who recruited him to the project, knowing that she worked well with him and likes him enough to keep him around. Like, *likes* him likes him; the two are engaged.

More importantly, let's address this bologna situation. Bologna is not supposed to be something you find yourself craving all hours of the day. It's a late-at-night affair — or a moment of childhood nostalgia. This meat

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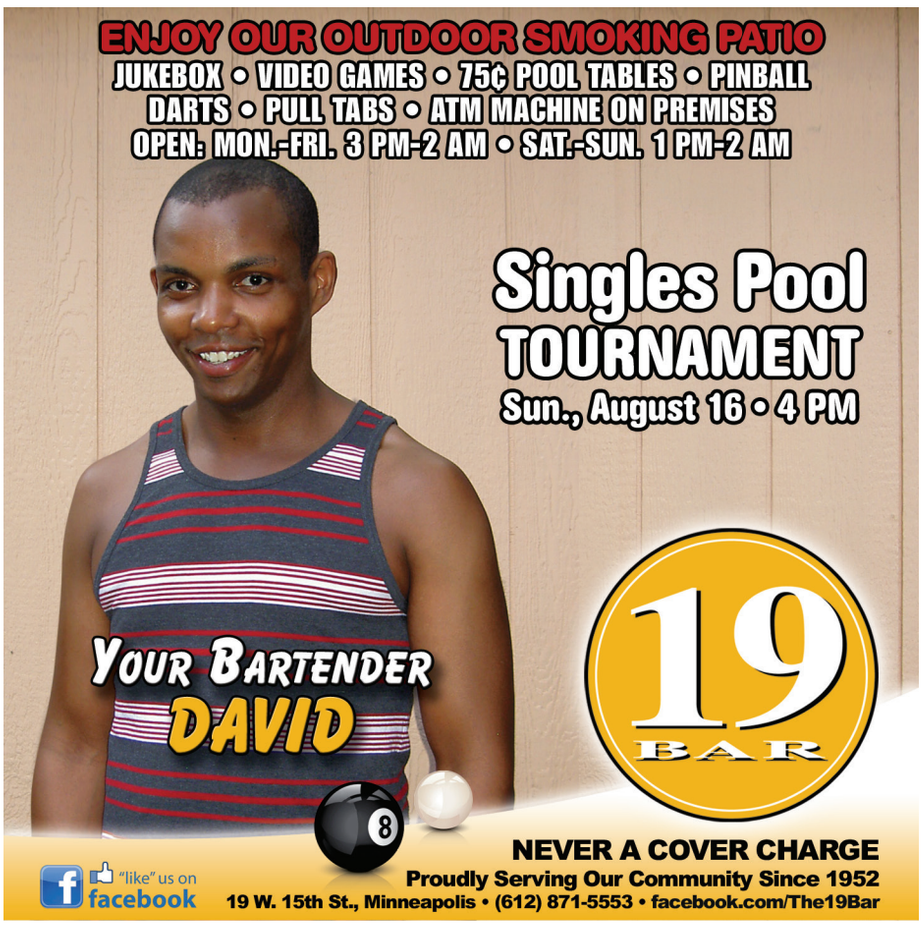
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is so beautifully spiced, with a creamy texture that it almost seems unfair for it to carry the same label as the meaty jingle that spells the name. Sliced just a bit fatter than lunch meat, it's layered atop a squishy St. Agnes Bakery bun and dressed with an oozy cheese sauce masquerading as American cheese. The rest of the menu will change with the seasons and whims of the farmers/producers they work with, but I have a feeling this sandwich will forever be on the menu.

The cheese sauce also drapes itself wantonly all over the burger they serve, double patties of grass-fed, butter-fatty beef also tucked into one of those buns. The dishes are similar and yet, it's a Sophie's choice to order just one. How do you pick between the decadent meats?

Contrasting the diner down-home feel of the bun-embraced meats are the elegant seasonal plates, like the pork loaf. What sounds like another version of smushed, mixed meat is in fact a stunner of a dish, kissed with smoke in a delicate pork broth. They claim it's a take on meatloaf, but the dishes are barely related. This is fine dining excellence with just a little wink-wink-nudge-nudge, know what I mean?

This is how Niver and Fratzke operate. What might not seem to be an obvious connection on paper blends seamlessly into a joyous dining experience. They've done this before with The Strip Club, which has grown to become a St. Paul institution. Named for a cut of steak, the menu highlights are the ever-changing small plates that the kitchen dreams up. The steak is the steak and it is always good, but the creativity of the kitchen staff is the draw for regulars. Well, that and the impeccable cocktail menu and excellent service. This duo has worked hard to establish themselves and bring some friends along on their successful run. Both have been at this game long enough that staff who have taken a turn inside those cozy, gothic walls are now spreading out and doing great things for food culture. From Dan Oskey's Tattersall Distilling Company to far off locations like Puerto Rico, the tastemakers who honed their craft under the guidance of Niver and Fratzke are making their own success stories. It only makes sense that a second restaurant would do that for the next generation.

Eaton's dishes are already changing, the summer menu is turning from early to peak summer produce. Elm is leading her team in the art of anticipating a guest's needs. The bar staff is one of the best in the Twin Cities, with drink makers who are a force to be reckoned with. Every meal should begin with a palate-prepping Watermelon Shrub. It's crisp, clear, kissed with fruit, perfumed with grassy basil and so positively refreshing that it might as well be called the August Antidote.

As the landscape of Lowertown has changed, so too will Saint Dinette as it evolves into the living, breathing entity it's destined to become. In the meantime, the bologna sandwich, spectacular seasonal plates, and humble-brag style service is hitting all the right notes. It's the coolest restaurant in the coolest neighborhood in the Saintly city. ■

SAINT DINETTE
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(From left) The view from Saint Dinette. The Cheeseburger is a contender.





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The Music Man. Photo by T. Charles Erickson

THE MUSIC MAN

Through Aug. 30
Guthrie Theater, 818 S. 2nd St., Mpls.
612-377-2224
www.guthrietheater.org

A way in which older men trapped in angrily rigid behaviors can squelch the human spirit is one of the deepest concerns of *The Music Man*. Those who reflexively deride Meredith Willson's 1957 musical classic will likely ridicule the "Americana" look and style of that most productions rightly manifest. Of course, that is a superficial interpretation and there is something beautiful about "Americana."

At the Guthrie, director John Miller-Stephany not only manifests that, but his staging is peopled with a vividly arrayed ensemble of period performances from the very smallest roles to the leads. Everyone impeccably embodies parochial small-town Iowa, 1912, and out of that a vibrantly creative spirit revolts from within to wrestle down the puritanical, punitive rigidity that life and social conditioning have thrown them to. This includes women, children, and some of the men who are genuinely sick of those of their fellow gender being such curmudgeons and brutes. These characters are upright Christians who, ironically, seem incapable of forgiveness or are too easily swayed by the unforgiving among their flock. But maybe Willson's overview is Providence's way of leading them back to the Golden Rule.

Danny Binstock plays Harold Hill, the traveling salesman who first tries to deceive the citizens of River City into buying band instruments and uniforms. Though the dazzling Binstock tends to sing some songs too quickly, it is probably not his choice. And it's great to see a younger actor in a role too often played by men too old for the part. He is well-matched with a luminous Stacey Bono as Marian the librarian who sheds her cynicism to embrace both Harold and the joy of life. This acting pair is endearing.

The Guthrie's staging is enhanced by vivid detail, historically inspired. Mathew J. LeFebvre's costumes and Todd Rosenthal's set splendidly emanate a surface of rosy perfection. Joe Chvala's choregraphy and Andrew Cooke's music direction frolic with vibrancy.

THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE

Through Aug. 16
Ordway Center
345 Washington St., St. Paul
612-224-4222
www.ordway.org

The Ordway Center is a unique treasure of an institution. Not only does it bring us major musical works from out of town, including Broadway, but it often produces its own musical revivals, which are typically Broadway caliber. Their track record on this count has been excellent for years under the leadership of producing artistic director James Rocco and president and CEO Patricia Mitchell, who retires at the end of the year.

Rocco has distinguished himself as among the top tier of Twin Cities musical directors, which is pretty impressive when you consider that that tier includes Peter Rothstein, Joe Chvala, John Command, Michael Brindisi, and John Miller-Stephany. Rocco, known for his *Broadway Songbook* revues, recently mounted a dynamo of a revival of *Damn Yankees* and on the heels of that he has revived Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Pirates of Penzance*.

Rocco has a subtly ingenious way of making classics accessible to today's eye and ear, yet his work exudes the original spirit the show originated in. He says that *The Pirates of Penzance* affected "the entire future of musical comedy. There are still songs written in the same form today. The songs we hear today have a slightly different musical accompaniment. Our ears have become accustomed to a brighter orchestra sound, which led to my wanting to keep the show exactly as written but with an orchestration that more represented the sound we hear on Broadway today. We are doing the exact songs, written in the same way as originally intended, same tempo, etc., but our show has been slightly re-orchestrated. We do not

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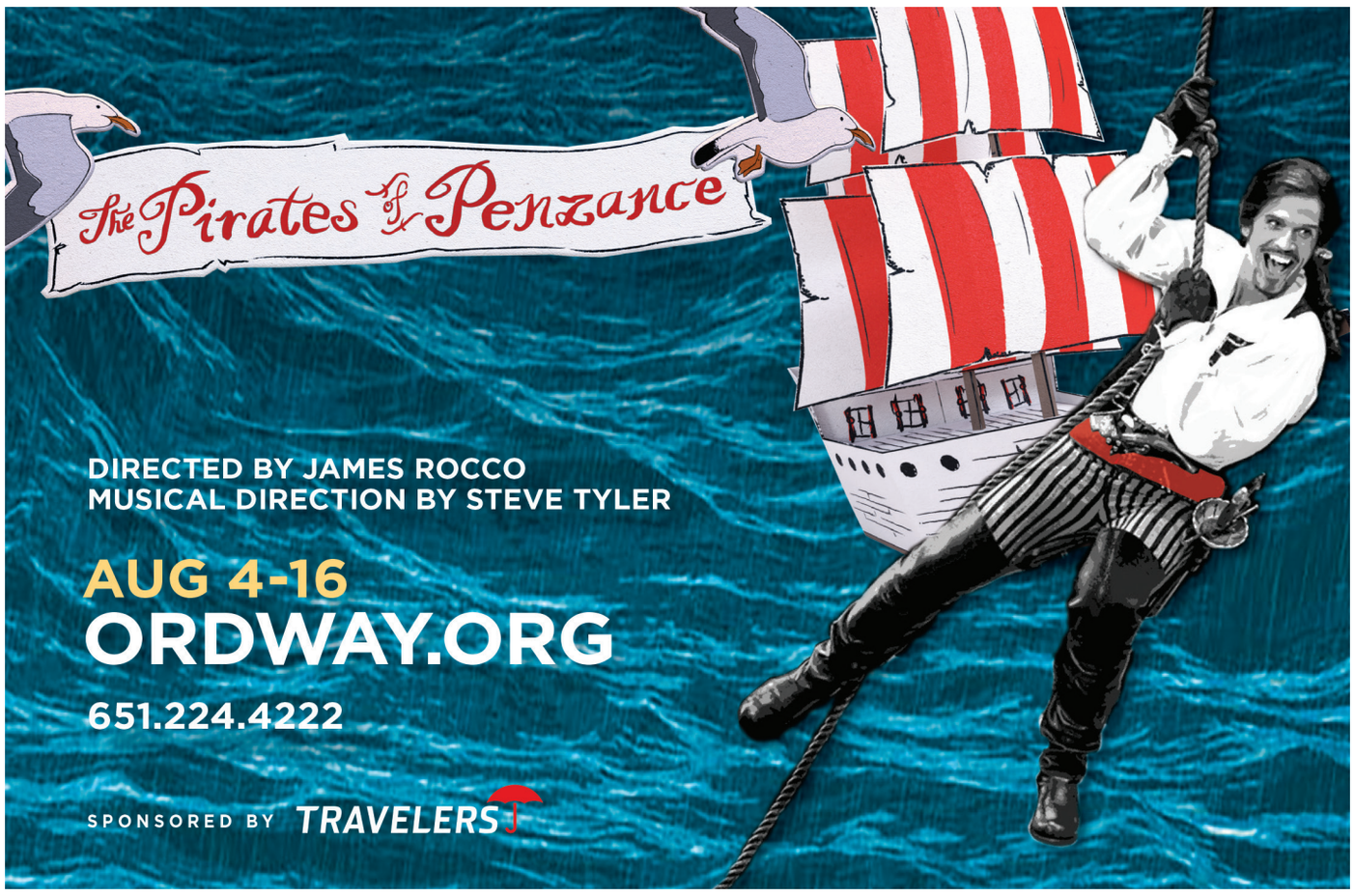
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use any contemporary instruments. All of the instruments could have been used in the original production. We simply highlight the instrumental sounds that people currently expect to hear in musical comedy."

20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA

Through Aug. 23
Children's Theatre, 2400 Third Ave. S., Mpls.
612-874-0400
www.childrenstheatre.org

Clever and engaging, the Children's Theatre had adapted Jules Verne's classic 1870 sci-fi novel into a contemporary high-tech, high-energy onsite theatricalized experience directed by Ryan Underbakke. Audience members are taken in small groups to walk, trot, run, and often crouch at the command of hyper-earnest actors playing zealous naval officers shuttling them under the sea to different rooms representing the shuttle and the stranded submarine below, the *Nautilus*. All performances are sharply focused.

Some of the children, the morning I attended, were genuinely frightened and even crying. So this is a show best left for older children accompanied by parents. For those who have difficulties trotting, running, and crouching, this experience may be taxing. Some older audience members in my group had some difficulties. One suggested aspect parents can talk about is Reed Sigmund's deliberately grotesque performance as Russian first mate of the enemy submarine, *Pius Alquis*. It's a demonizing and rather frightening portrayal of a Slavic man that some may want to discuss, whether they are of Slavic descent or not.



You Can't Take it With You. Photo by Teri Pickett



20,000 Leagues Under the Sea. Photo by Dan Norman

Something older kids might discuss is Gerald Drake's exquisitely decadent portrayal of what appears to be a corrupt American, or Western, general. The piece muses on the way in which we may not always be sure that those in positions of military authority always have our national security as their utmost priority.

YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU

Through Aug. 9
Jungle Theater
2951 Lyndale Ave. S., Mpls.
612-822-7063
www.jungletheater.com

George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart wrote the comedy that won the 1937 Pulitzer Prize for Drama. Revivals of *You Can't Take it With You* can easily seem old hat and safe, but at the Jungle, director Gary Gisselman has recreated the late '30s with deep affection for the time; both through the eccentric characters and the various views of life they maintain. You may leave uplifted (I certainly did) but you'll have a lot to mull over: the deadening way in which the economic rat race can degrade our humanity, how much precious time and energy we spend on trying to impress others when their opinion shouldn't make a bit of difference, and the way in which men grow old either gracefully or curmudgeonly.

Gisselman has elicited some deeply original performances from some top Twin Cities actors. Anna Sundberg plays "working class" gal, Alice, and Hugh Kennedy plays her wealthy fiancé, Tony Kirby. Sundberg is a consistently strong actress but she has never been this authentic and vulnerable. Kennedy is lovely as a dynamic guy who stands up to his snooty, judgmental parents played with flourish by an actual married couple, Nathaniel and Cathleen Fuller. They are terrific as characters you love to hate.

But it's Raye Birk as Alice's Grandpa Martin who really seems to be the beating heart of the show. Birk illuminates a man who has bravely and lovingly questioned the wisdom of struggling your way up the money tree out of a habit born of fear. He may not make you change your life, but you'll be provided golden nuggets to reflect on. Tom Butsch's set and Amelia Cheever's costumes vibrate the '30s ambience with warmth and style. ■


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Coffee, Tea, or Me. Photo by Matheu Brooks

This year's Minnesota Fringe Festival has an array of GLBT shows that last no more than an hour. It's a great way to take the pulse of where things are and where they are going within the queer "zeitgeist." This year's trans-oriented shows promise to be especially strong. Some of the GLBT works are locally grown, some have come from afar. Here are some of the offerings that can be seen at a variety of Minneapolis venues. Go to www.fringefestival.org for performance times.

COFFEE, TEA, OR ME

Phoenix Theatre

No. It's not that racy pulp (hetero) sex fiction book, it's one of Fringe's most beloved veterans, Les Kurkendaal. He may be from L.A. but he has a devoted Twin Cities following. This show is about the time he took a road trip to Minneapolis from Los Angeles to get over a serious case of writer's block. He listened to a lot of public radio on the way, which fueled his imagination.

CONFESSIONS OF A BUTTER PRINCESS OR WHY THE COW JUMPED OVER THE MOON

Theatre in the Round

When a cow (Hector Chavarria) and a Queen (Erin Denman) try to escape the wrath of three princesses named Kay (Alana Horton, Briana Patnode, Madelyne Riley), butter actually becomes a matter of life and death. Director Chris Garza shares: "I've lived in Minnesota for almost a decade now and even though this has become my home, there are aspects of Minnesota that remain fantastically strange. I'm talking about the butter princesses at the State Fair. I wanted to make a fun show rooted in my love for the princesses — and my love of butter — with a great cast and a queer sensibility. (It is) set in outer space because it's Fringe!"

GETTING TO ELLEN

Mixed Blood Theatre

Trans activist-author Ellen Krug's autobiography has been adapted for stage by David Ahlvers and directed by Patrick Kozicky who says, "Though Ellen Krug's journey is very specifically about her gender identity, there is a very clear message about self-discovery and living your life authentically."

Krug shares that the play "focuses on my struggle to love myself over loving Lydia, my soul mate of 32 years. We had started out as high school sweethearts. Like many, I was taught that self-sacrifice for others is paramount; for me, that rule meant denying my essence as a woman. I believe the play explores this struggle and the theme of how each of us seek authenticity as our true selves. I call it my 'gender journey.'" Produced by the GLBT-oriented BOOM! Theatre.

GROWING INTO MY BEARD

HUGE Theater

Written by solo performer Bay Bryan, director Artem Yatsunov shares that this "is a personal coming-out and coming-of-age story. From Bay's hilarious and erratic improvs, his soft and silken songs, to the lingering melodies undercutting scenes of sorrowful daydreams, the entire show is ultimately Bay's triumph of identity. To me, Bay's story is a great statement of why celebrating the acceptance of your queer identity is just as vital as acknowledging the struggle of being queer."

MELANCHOLY LONDON

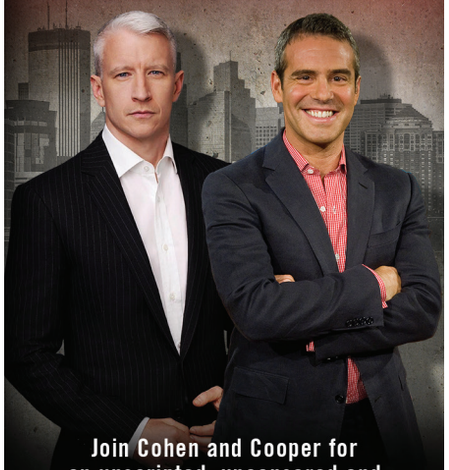
Mixed Blood Theatre

Tim Uren has created some marvelous Fringe shows in the past and his latest, *Melancholy London*, produced by Ghoulish Delights, looks to be a sure bet. He goes to supernatural Welsh author Arthur Machen's *The Inmost Light* for this new stage adaptation.

Uren shares, "The first time I read Machen's tale of theft, murder, and demonic possession, I was left saying 'but I loved that!' and 'I'm

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32

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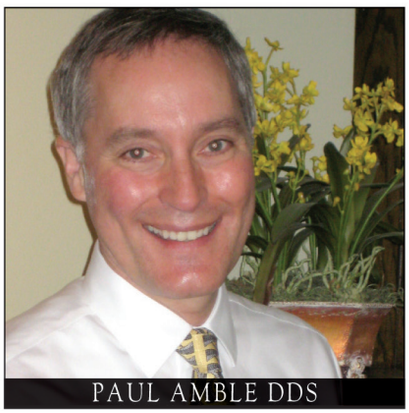


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Shelly Bachberg Presents: Orange is the New P.O.T.U.S: The Musical. Photo by Dan Norman



Standing on Ceremony: The Gay Marriage Plays. Photo by Paul Murphy

not sure what happened!' The plot and characters are swimming in subtle insinuations and unspoken agendas. In the story, Dyson (Tristan Miller) tells his acquaintance, Salisbury (Matt Saxe), about the investigation of a strange crime. As I worked with the text, the tone of their conversation reminded me of the way ex-lovers speak: a strange blend of good manners, vague accusations, and bittersweet affection. Once I saw that I could no longer see the story in any other way. In my adaptation, their love is what's truly at stake, and Dyson's sinister tale of Dr. Black, played by myself, and Mrs. Black, played by Boo Segersin, serves as a dark mirror to their relationship."

SHELLY BACHBERG PRESENTS: ORANGE IS THE NEW P.O.T.U.S: THE MUSICAL

Rarig Thrust

Max Wojtanowicz and Nikki Swoboda gave us the terrific *Fruit Fly: The Musical* with Michael Gruber's music. Their latest draws on the political ramblings of former Republican Congresswoman Michele Bachmann, including her feelings on GLBT legislation and the community at large. It also features a lesbian character played by Kendall Anne Thompson.

(Doppleganger Alert!) Those who enjoy Kim Kivens's top-notch musical performances have probably noticed that she resembles Bachmann. So you, like me, knew it was only a matter of time until she played the Tea Party's favorite homophobe on stage. Kivens shares, "*Shelly Bachberg Presents: Orange is the New P.O.T.U.S.: The Musical* is a show about how easy it is for people to come into power. A blind eye can be turned and the next thing you know that crazy wacky politician that you can't believe is taken seriously is now in office. My motivation to do this show is due to the writing being smart, kooky, and off-the-wall because a lot of it isn't a stretch to what a certain real politician may have said and continues to say in the public eye. Thank goodness for YouTube; I use it for character study."

PAM + JAVI = FOREVER

Rarig Proscenium

Pam Colby is a filmmaker of note because she tells such great stories (including having written some for this very publication). So you can easily imagine she can do the same in person. Colby is joined by another talent, Javier Morillo. She shares, "I first heard Javier perform when I attended the monthly Moth storytelling competition at the Amsterdam Bar and Grill in St. Paul. I was struck by how out, honest, and vulnerable he was. Clearly the large multi-generational audience was receptive. I began telling my stories and the audience connected. We decided to join forces in a Fringe show. My stories are about growing up queer in Iowa, and navigating gender borders. Javi's stories are about growing up queer in Puerto Rico, and navigating cultural borders. Humor is central to our approach."

STANDING ON CEREMONY: THE GAY MARRIAGE PLAYS

Rarig Proscenium

You may remember this grouping of plays by various playwrights was simultaneously presented in 40 theaters in 2011. It was a historic event for both the histories of gay and lesbian civil rights as well as the American theater. The Ensemble Theatre Co. in partnership with Dakota Fine Arts Consortium has revived it — a great idea, given now that we have marriage equality. The more we reflect, examine, and — not to mention — have some laughs about gay marriage, the better informed we are about this institution we can finally partake in.

Director Mary Beth King points out, "Like all brides and grooms, these couples have the usual issues to solve before marriage that cause fights and tears and drama: legalities, connecting flights, family interference, table place cards, reception venues, the definition of lifetime commitments, and the meaning of promises."

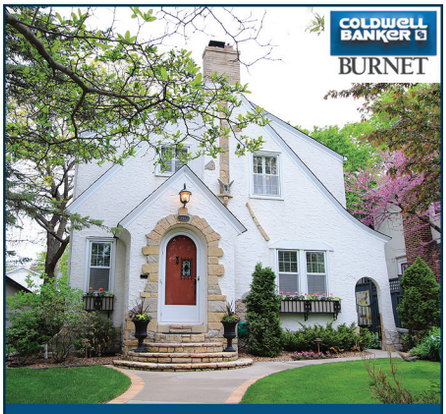
TRANS FAMILIES

HUGE Theatre

Playwright and book author Christy Marie Kent says *Trans Families* tells the stories of three families with minor children when a parent transitions. "When I went through my own transition, several people at work or in the neighborhood said, 'I don't have anything against him becoming a woman. Really! I'm not a bigot. But, I'm just worried about the children. If he really cared about his kids, would he put them through this?' I hope that this project — the book and the show — puts an end to that kind of thinking, for these stories demonstrate that the kids are going to be all right."

Kent, an intensive researcher, shares, "I loved getting to know these families. To get the story of the transgender trucker, I rode with her for a week, getting insight into the trucking lifestyle while recording her story. In some cases I have done the phone interviews by phone or via Skype. But, in all cases, these people illustrate that the best option for each individual family depends on its situation." ■

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5 Reasons to Keep Watching Women's Soccer

It happens every time. Every man, woman, and child in the United States goes crazy for women's soccer for approximately two weeks, only to forget it exists for the next four years. I'm no better. Although I go crazy for women's soccer during the FIFA World Cup, and then again during the Summer Olympics, too, before forgetting it exists. Say it with me: "*Not this time!*" There are plenty of reasons why 2015 could be the year that excitement for women's soccer in the United States is here to stay.

1. GLBT PRIDE

Hello, look at all the lesbians! The United States Women's National Team (USWNT) boasts three out lesbian players and their head coach, Jill Ellis. Led both on and off the field by the legendary and soon-to-be-retired Abby Wambach, the USWNT was the most publicly out team in the FIFA World Cup tournament. A photo of Wambach kissing her wife as she leaned over the rail in congratulations after the championship game went viral. "This is what love looks like!" some people shouted from their computers, while the rest of us yelled, "Oh my god, she's gonna fall!" Then, during an interview with SportsCenter, midfielder Megan Rapinoe was asked to write down one word to describe herself. Hastily scribbling on her whiteboard, Rapinoe flipped it over and gleefully cried, "GAAAAAAY!"

2. MARSHAWN WHO?

"Beast Mode," is what they call the Seahawks Marshawn Lynch, for his punishing running style. Compared to Morgan Brian, Alexandra Popp, and Abby Wambach, it's more like "Kitten Mode." In the 28th minute of USA vs. Germany, Brian of the USWNT and Popp of Germany both jumped for the ball on a free kick, clashing heads and crumpling to the turf. For about five minutes, both players received medical attention, as home viewers watched blood seep through Popp's blonde hair. For those of us used to the "flopping" of men's basketball and soccer, what happened next was unbelievable. Brian walked to the sideline for a quick concussion test, Popp wrapped tape around her head, and then both women *ran back onto the field and played the game until the end*.

The play was reminiscent of a similar moment in 2010, when Abby Wambach collided with a player from Mexico during a World Cup qualifier. The less queasy and curious can Google "Abby Wambach staples" for a glimpse of how much tougher Wambach is than the rest of us. As she lay on the grass, blood streamed from her head while she waited for the training staff to tend to her. They must have been out of tape, because instead they used a *staple gun*. WHO HAS STAPLE GUNS ON THE SIDELINES? That's right, they stapled her head right then and there, as she slightly winced, got up, and kept playing.

Marshawn, you have a lot of beasting to do to catch up.

3. HIGHLIGHTS

Two words: Hat Trick. For those of you who associate these words with magicians and rabbits, let me tell you what they mean in fútbol. Three goals by one player in a single game. How about Carli Lloyd with a hat trick in the first *16 minutes* of the World Cup Championship vs. Japan, leading the U.S. to their first World Cup Title in 16 years in a 5–2 rout? How about one of those goals being launched from the midfield stripe? The feat was historic in many ways — she became the only woman to score a hat trick in a final, and the fastest to a hat trick among both men *and* women. Who says soccer isn't exciting? And if those highlights aren't enough to rock your socks, watch Hope Solo's dramatic saves against Australia. Those, combined with the remainder of her performance resulted in the Golden Glove: the World Cup Top Goalkeeper.

4. GET WITH IT

The rest of the world, that is. While football is the most popular sport in the United States, fútbol rules globally. That, and the metric system. C'mon America. Per FIFA's Big Count, there are over 275 million active players around the world. Compare that to the less than 5000 players total in American-style football leagues around the world, combined.

5. CHAMPIONS IN ACTION

Did I mention all these women currently play on a team near you? Each player on the women's national team currently is on a roster for one of the nine teams in the National Women's Soccer League. While the closest team to us here in Minnesota is the Chicago Red Stars, or perhaps FC Kansas City, the league has recently announced a deal with FOX Sports to televise 10 games of the 2015 season, which has already begun. This is great news for those of us that want to see our favorite players in action. Golden Ball winner Carli Lloyd has already scored in her first outing with the Houston Dash, where Morgan Brian also plays. Hope Solo and Megan Rapinoe both suit up for the Seattle Reign. The Red Stars boast Christen Press and Julie Johnston, and the Portland Thorns have the new cover girl of EA Sports' popular video game, FIFA 16, Alex Morgan. Supporting these teams during the U.S. National Team "off-season" creates a stronger team for international competition and provides a host of inspiring women for young athletes to look up to. Not to mention the fact that numerous international stars also play in the league.

BONUS: EASY ON THE EYES

And if I don't yet have you convinced, let me remind you that these women aren't exactly, um, hard to watch. Out lesbian Ali Krieger was featured in this year's edition of ESPN's Body Issue, and needless to say, with the constant running required in the sport, the women of soccer are in fantastic, uh, shape. A recent conversation in my household went something like:

Me: Dang, with those eyes I'd let Hope Solo get away with anything.

Wife: Excuse me, what? I'm going to trade you in for Abby Wambach.

Me: That'd probably be a good decision.

I know, I know, sexism in sport, and all that, but these women are at their most attractive when they're doing what they do best, which is winning World Championships in dramatic fashion, giving us history-making and awe-inspiring moments while they're at it. It's time we stay tuned. ■

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FASHION

• WEDDING STYLE •

By Shane Lueck • Photos by Bruce Silcox

WEDDING STYLE: THE MINNESOTA FASHION AWARDS WAY



Spring wedding season may be behind us, but beware: fall weddings still lurk on the horizon. Styling yourself as a member of the wedding party is relatively easy: just follow what the happy couple suggest you do. But styling yourself as a guest gets pretty tricky. Should I wear my hair up or down? It's 90 degrees, how can I stay cool but still dress appropriately? The people behind Rumble on the Runway and the Minnesota Fashion Awards offer their style tips for how to stay cool, calm, and stylish at the next wedding you're invited to.

STYLE STARTS AT THE TOP: HAIR

Aside from finding the outfit, choosing a hairstyle is probably the next greatest stress factor for wedding guests. When deciding between an up-do or wearing your hair down, Tressie Schneider, the rumble segment coordinator for Rumble on the Runway and Minnesota Fashion Awards, suggests asking yourself five questions:

CONTINUED ON PAGE 38



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1. Is this a formal evening wedding? (Then go up.)
2. Is it an afternoon, more relaxed wedding? (Think about wearing it down.)
3. Is your total look formal or casual? (Style appropriately.)
4. Is everyone in the wedding wearing their hair down, casual? (Maybe don't try so hard; rock it casual.)
5. How do you want to wear your hair? (Perhaps the most important question, and then do a casual/formal version of that.)

Not clear enough? Faatemah Ampy is an award-winning hair stylist and panelist for the Minnesota Fashion Awards, so heed her advice. "Guests should come dressed for the time of day the wedding is held," Ampy says. "Common hair mistake: hair that is overdone. Your hairstyle should embody your personal style and not be driven by trend. Remember: trends are guidelines, not a road map to excellence. Always do you!"

A similar sentiment is shared by Fatima Olive, fellow Minnesota Fashion Awards panelist and makeup artist. "I recommend sticking with more classic styles; nothing too fussy or trendy," she says. "A top knot, classic ponytail, and braids are all very fashionable and won't date you when you look at pictures 10 years down the road."

After taking a side in the great debate of up versus down, think about the texture of your hair. For warm weather, Olive recommends you stick with your hair's natural texture. In other words, if you have curly or wavy hair, incorporate that into the hairstyle you are choosing. "That way you don't need to fight with humidity and have hair revert to its natural texture halfway through the ceremony," she says. "And don't forget a bit of Big Sexy Hair Weather Proof spray to control the frizz."

SAY NO TO SWEATY MAKEUP

The experts agree: go for the "less is more" approach. Olive recommends a basic look: a tinted moisturizer or BB cream, a sheer stain for the cheeks and lips like Benetint from Benefit, and a waterproof mascara so you don't have to worry about it running during the ceremony (she loves Diorshow waterproof mascara).

Make sure you're not falling into the trap of layering on more makeup or hair products to "last though the long day" and heat. Use the proper prep products and finishing products and you will extend the longevity of your hair and makeup looks without looking like your face and hair are frozen in time. Instead of falling into that trap, Schneider suggests a few steps to look great no matter the weather:

- Prep your skin with a shine/oil control primer.
- Go light on the moisturizers.
- Prep your eyelids as well. Heat and sweat mean eyeshadow creasing and nobody has time for that.
- Set with a matte finishing powder and, if you get really oily, spray a setting spray in your T-zone.
- Pack tissues to dab (not wipe) sweat off your forehead and oil blotting sheets for your upper lip and T-zone.
- Rock a hat. Not only will it protect your face and scalp from getting burnt and shiny from direct sun hitting you, but it takes your total look to another level.
- If skipping the hat option, make sure to use a humidity-resistant finishing hair spray.

With that basic routine in your repertoire, the question then becomes how much makeup is appropriate to wear? Gauge the setting of the wedding and how formal or casual it is while staying true to your own style. "If you normally go all out with your makeup, there is no reason to hold back out of respect," Schneider says. "Do it up like you normally would. If you are a fresh face natural kinda gal, maybe just up the game a little by adding a tad more cheek color and some lip color. It's a great way to 'dress up' your everyday face without adding too much time or products to your routine."Olive's best advice is to pay attention to skincare. "Makeup is icing on the cake," she says. "Take care of your skin and you actually need less makeup to look great."

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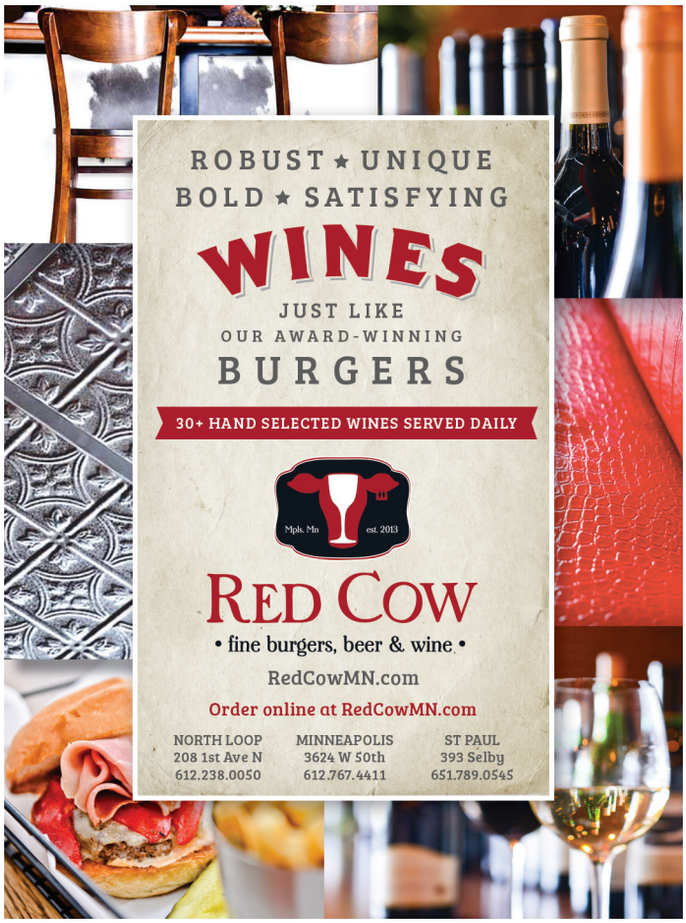


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TRENDY VS. CLASSIC

"I do really think you can go either way," Schneider says. "But as a general rule I say think of the style of the people who are getting married. If they are super trendy and that's the setting of the wedding, go for the latest trends! If it's more of a classic feel and the couple is more reserved, maybe go with the timeless LBD. You can always add a trendy shoe or scarf to jazz it up if you are bored with it."

Of course, remember that weddings are highly photographed events. How would you like to be remembered 10 years from now? Is the trendy look going to date you? Olive says, "I think going too trendy can be a bit of a mistake or wearing anything too flashy that could upstage the couple getting married."

Sarah Edwards, stylist and Minnesota Fashion Awards panelist, says it boils down to personal style. "It's important to focus on your own, personal style and find one that can work for a variety of events & parties," she says.

Edwards suggests focusing on the theme of the wedding and use great tailoring to create your look, a thought that Schneider echoes. "Do your research for the wedding or event you are going to and know the dress code," Schneider says. "Show respect for it and the hosts. But at the end of the day, be yourself and feel fabulous. You will have such a better time if you look and feel good and like yourself. Stay true to your own personal style while staying within the dress code and feel of the event. Your smile and confidence will always be your best accessory and my best style tip."

STAYING COOL DOESN'T MEAN MORE SKIN

The key here is light, breathable fabrics — think quality linens. Schneider suggests open-toe shoes and her special trick: bring a little vintage fan in your clutch. She says, "You will keep your face cool and look *so* glam fanning yourself."

While women can go sleeveless (or even strapless) for their attire, it's definitely harder for men to look dressed up and still stay cool. But a lot of Schneider's tips are the same: try breathable lightweight fabrics. If it's a more casual outdoor wedding, try breezy linen pants and a white button-up. "Dress cropped pants and chino shorts styled with dress shirts and ties or bow ties is a huge trend right now and can be a tad cooler," she says. "Just make sure you dress up those shorts if you go that route! Tread carefully there. Otherwise as a general rule for men, tanks and shorts are never acceptable for a wedding."

Edwards sympathizes with guys who want to stay cool during warm weather. She says, "Atmosfere in Minneapolis is the best place to find great things to wear for weddings. And it is always fashionable to #supportlocal."

The natural tendency in warm weather is to wear less clothing, but be careful not to show too much skin. Wear light fabrics that still cover instead of leaving little to nothing to the imagination. "I say for a general rule of dressing: show off one area, legs or arms/chest," Schneider says. "Not both and never midriffs for a wedding. A great style to keep cool and still look wedding-guest-appropriate is a strapless (not too low) chiffon A-line dress that comes to your knees. Or a simple loose slip dress made from a light fabric. Both can be styled more formal with heels and accessories or casual with flats."

Edwards is quick to agree with this sentiment. "If it evens out you're OK," Edwards says. "Meaning if you have a lot of leg showing, then cover up on the top. Or if you are wearing a maxi then it is okay to show more skin up top."

On the opposite side of the spectrum, staying warm as we move into fall and winter wedding season is much easier. This isn't as hard as there is usually ample heat and weddings are often indoors. But if you go to a fall outdoor wedding and it's a tad breezy, Schneider suggests dressing in layers as the temps can drastically change.

"Add a fab jacket to your look or try a fur stole to add warmth and a touch of a vintage-lux feel to your look," she says. "Wear closed-toe shoes and bring dress gloves that match your look. Rock your hair down and add a hat to keep your neck and ears warm for a chilly outdoor fall wedding."

COMMON MISTAKES TO AVOID

Going severely underdressed or overdressed is the first thing that comes to Schneider's mind. "This seems like it would go unsaid, but I have seen it happen," she says. "If you show up in your everyday look, pants or jeans and not doing your hair or makeup at all, it just screams, 'I don't want to be here, I don't care, I have no respect for you, I'm just here for the food and where is the open bar.' Don't be that person. Just don't."



On the other side of the scale, it also can be disrespectful to show up and outdo the bride and groom. Don't show up as a guest with your hair and makeup obviously done professionally (you're not fooling anyone) and dressed to the nines, overshadowing the wedding party. Schneider advises you know what you are going to and gauge your look appropriately. She says, "It's not your day, take a step back."

Another common faux pas to avoid is matching the wedding. It's as simple as finding out the wedding colors and not wearing that color dress. "Let's avoid being approached all night and asked what your role in the wedding was," Schneider says.

But when it comes to style advice, Edwards may have the last word: "Always be yourself. Unless you can be Beyoncé. Then always be Beyoncé." ■

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By Shane Lueck

ALL CURVES ARE BEAUTIFUL:

FINDING YOUR PLUS-SIZE WEDDING DRESS



Yukia Walker-Harris and Yuneisia Harris. Photo courtesy of Curvaceous Couture

Many women have dreamt of finding their perfect wedding dress all their lives. The search is often exciting and emotional. But for those brides with curvier figures, it can be especially trying when most stores only carry smaller sample sizes. Your consultant's job is to be knowledgeable in the field of bridal fashion, but it is extremely helpful for the bride to do a little research first. She should know going in roughly what style of dress she's interested in (like a princess-style ball gown or a sexy sheath), if there are any deal-breakers for her in a gown (like straps or a corset back), and have a firm grasp on what her budget is.

Enter Yukia Walker and Yuneisia Harris, sisters and owners of Curvaceous Couture, a first-of-its-kind bridal salon specializing in couture gowns to fit all body types. Yukia and Yuneisia have made it their mission to help curvy brides look and feel amazing in the right dress for their figure on their special day. The spirited sisters are living their dream as they help women of all shapes and sizes in TLC's new reality series, *Curvy Brides*.

Yukia and Yuneisia first conceived the idea to open a specialty bridal boutique after Yukia had an awful experience shopping for her own wedding dress in 2008. After not being able to find a dress in her size, Yukia needed Yuneisia to try on gowns for her. With limited options available, Yukia was forced to buy a dress that she didn't feel comfortable in. It became clear to the sisters through this experience that the market was seriously lacking. Every bride deserves a bridal moment they will remember forever and a dress that fits, no matter the size. And from there, Curvaceous Couture was born.

Obviously, the sisters recommend that, if at all possible, a bride should make an appointment with them so that she'll definitely have samples she can actually try on. But with their salon located in the Baltimore-Washington D.C. area, that might be difficult for Minnesota brides. When a girls' weekend

CONTINUED ON PAGE 44



Style W353. This strapless gown's softly ruched bodice trails to a playful ruffled skirt, with a flair for drama and elegance. Photo courtesy of Allure Bridals



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photography by noah wolf

trip to the east coast is out of the picture, brides might find some value in checking out smaller sample sizes for inspiration.

"Sometimes there is a dress that a bride will have seen in a bridal magazine or online and she desperately wants to see in person," Yukia says. "It may be that a standard bridal salon in your area has a sample of that dress, but they may only have it in a size 6. The trouble is that even seeing it in person on a hanger or a model isn't the same as seeing it on your body, which is why we encourage brides of all shapes and sizes to come to our salon."

But it gets difficult to know where to start looking when there is no general rule on which styles to look for. Here's the thing, "Curvy Brides" is a very broad term. Brides with all sorts of different shapes that all qualify as "curvy", and therefore no one style will suit all of them.

"Remember, the most important thing is for our brides to feel great, so we encourage them to choose whichever style makes them the happiest," Yukia says. "We vet the designers we carry based on the structure they build into their gowns, the quality of materials, and their grasp of building curve into their patterns. We also do our best to carry designers who have wide size ranges so that we can accommodate as many different shapes as possible. At the end of the day, the style that suits a curvy bride best is the one that makes her glow."

In general, the sisters advise that a curvy bride should avoid being pigeonholed into one shape or style because of other people's opinions. "We often get brides in the salon who think that they can only wear what we affectionately refer to as a 'bridal muumuu' because they aren't a size 10," Yuneisia says. "We've had brides come in and say they only want an A-line dress and walk out with a figure-hugging trumpet gown, or a waist-defining ball gown."

In the case of same-sex weddings, the sisters say to go for styles that make you happy. If both brides want to look like princesses, then the consultant's job is to find two dresses that complement each other, even though they will have similar shapes. Yukia says, "In our experience, brides want their personalities to shine out in their gown and rarely have our LGBT brides chosen looks that are too similar."

Recognizing that not every bridal salon is going to have larger sizes, the sisters encourage brides to take matters into their own hands. If there is a local bridal salon that you wish would carry a larger size, the best thing to do is call or email them and share your opinion.

"It is important to remember that when a salon is purchasing a sample they have to guess how many brides they can fit into that sample, and what type of bride is most likely to buy that dress," Yuneisia says. "They also have to account for the sales rep from the designer recommending a size based on the shape of the dress. If most of the girls who come to that store are between a 6 and 12, and the designer recommends ordering an 8, then it makes more sense for a standard salon to purchase the 8 or a 10 than to purchase larger sizes."

Despite the allure of creating a custom creation from scratch, the sisters don't advise it; having a custom dress is a big project. It involves first finding a seamstress or tailor whom you trust, seeing their work, and going through the design process with them. Then it takes months of mock-ups and fittings, with no way to know 100 percent what your dress will look like in the end. It is certainly a great option for some brides, but it will be a much calmer experience for a bride to order a dress that already exists that she loves, and have custom touches added by a seamstress like sleeves, more sparkle, or a different back.

After deciding which bridal salon to go through when ordering a dress, the sisters say the most common mistake that they see with all brides is not being aware of the timelines. "We get brides who come into our salon all the time with five months or less to their wedding and no time for us to order a gown," Yuneisia says. "We always recommend shopping 9–12 months before your wedding to avoid limiting your options for your gown. The second mistake that some brides make is expecting a fitted dress to look painted on their bodies. Your dress can be fitted, even tight, but you still have to be able to move!"

For brides looking for designers who make gorgeous plus-size options, Curvaceous Couture carries designs from Ian Stuart, Enzoani, Allure Bridal, Pronovias, San Patrick, and more. But the most important tip the sisters can provide? Simply don't work with salons who aren't size-friendly. As Yukia says, "If a salon is unwilling to work with you, then spend your money somewhere that will." ■



Capped sleeves with a sweetheart neckline combine to create a gorgeous silhouette on this lace and beaded gown. Photo courtesy of Maggie Sottero



Style 1309. This fitted lace-up gown has a soft sweetheart strapless neckline. Pleating wraps around this form fitting silhouette with strongly beaded lace accents placed asymmetrically from one another. Photo courtesy of Bonny Bridals Unforgettable

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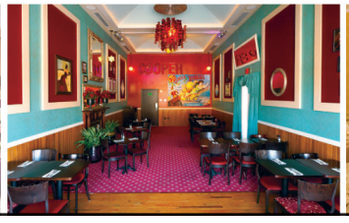




Photo: lauren b. photography

By Shane Lueck • Photos by Hubert Bonnet

KNOT EASY: HOW TO WEAR A BOW TIE WITH STYLE



The Bow Tie Shoppe searches the States for the perfect bow tie fabric.

As undergrads at the University of Minnesota, Brad Wellman and Matt Brunnette shared a sense of style, both having a passion for menswear and dressing well, even being unofficial style advisers to friends during their college days.

After college they had been separately toying with ideas of getting into the menswear space, unbeknownst to each other. That is, until Brunnette purchased a few fabrics while on vacation in New York that would become the first set of Mill City Fineries bow ties. He taught himself how to make bow ties over the ensuing months, and he and Wellman conversed nearly daily on vision, operations, product, and distribution expansion. Now the duo has become a go-to stop for anyone looking for one-of-a-kind or custom bow ties.

Lucky for us, anyone can wear a bow tie. "To be honest, I don't think face shape matters for tie selection the way it does for some things, like sunglasses," Wellman says. "Whether you're wearing a necktie, bow tie, bolo, or ascot, what really matters most is how you pair it with the rest of your outfit, and wearing it with confidence."

This is a sentiment that Renee Larson, owner of The Bow Tie Shoppe, can agree with. "I believe anyone can wear a bow tie!" she says. "If you are of larger stature you will just want your bow tie to be proportioned to your size."

The Bow Tie Shoppe started in 2013 by artist and designer, Renee Larson. Her love of the '50s and '60s comes through in the fabrics and prints she combines. She hunts local and far away places for vintage fabrics and inspiration for her creations, making each bow tie limited in quantity or truly one-of-a-kind.

People who are interested in wearing a bow

tie for the first time can be a bit intimidated by the thought of learning to tie one. But first-time wearers need not despair, Larson offers a video tutorial on how to tie a bow tie on her website. With a little practice, you'll have it in no time.

"Like picking out your first suit, start with a tie that will prove to be versatile in terms of the range of shirts you'll be able to wear it with," Wellman says. "I'd opt for one in the blue or gray color family, with a subtle pattern (if any), which will allow you to dress it up or down with relative ease."

Mill City Fineries also offers two bow tie styles — traditional and diamond-point — to help find your preferred style. The fact of the matter is, bow ties come in a variety of silhouettes: diamond tip, butterfly tip, straight, or, if you're daring, batwing! Larson notes that many are also reversible, changing the look depending on how you tie it.

"What I love about bow ties is you're generally less likely to see someone wearing one in a given situation, compared to neckties," Wellman adds. "This not only allows you to stand out, but exudes a sense of confidence and pride in who you are."

For anyone looking for a custom and unique look for a wedding, some other event, or just everyday style, you can customize your bow tie by choosing fabrics, colors, and silhouettes. Both shops can also use fabric from something that has meaning to you, like Grandpa's favorite flannel or Dad's old necktie.

"Bow ties are particularly fun for creating a customized look for weddings because they're a bit more non-traditional," Wellman says. "They innately express an air of fun, and you can get really creative with varying fabric patterns and colors. And they look really great on dogs and ring-bearers."

Of course, any kind of customization at Mill City Fineries or The Bow Tie Shoppe will start with a conversation about the wedding color palette, outfits, and your personal style as to what you're looking for. Only then can couples begin looking at fabric options and refining the selections down to a final set. "This is my favorite part of the business: working with couples to make the perfect bow tie for their occasion," Larson says. "Making your bow tie from Grandpa's shirt or Dad's old necktie is a great way to keep their memory alive. I've even made one from fabric from Mom's wedding dress."

For Wellman and Brunnette, fabrics available at Mill City Fineries comes down to patterns they personally like and think would work well for a particular tie style, but what they really look for are fabric styles that are generally not seen as often in the marketplace. "While silk is ever-present for neckties, we use a lot of cottons, including linen, chambray, and seersucker, as well as heavy and suiting-grade wools, and tweeds," Wellman says. "We search high and low for antique, vintage fabrics, and love creating small-batch bow ties from fabrics as old as the 1940s!"

Larson has a similar process for selecting fabrics to offer in her shop. She says, "I scour the States for unique, often vintage, fabrics with great patterns and prints. I've been told I have a great eye for curating unique fabric pairings."

After the fabric is chosen, then comes the hard part: sewing. Each shop creates ties in small batches, so you won't see the same fabric pairings everywhere. These are unique pieces sewn in Minneapolis studios.

It should go without saying, but Mill City Fineries and The Bow Tie Shoppe only offer the self-tie option. No pre-tied bows here! Wellman adds, "We use adjustment ribbon, so as long as you know your dress shirt neck size, you'll have a perfectly sized bow tie every time."

Now comes the fun part: styling the bow tie you've diligently picked out. Ultimately, it comes down to personal preference and style.

For Wellman, it's as easy as getting dressed in the morning. "I approach my bow tie selection much the way I approach my necktie selection," he says. "Avoid conflicting colors or patterns between the shirt, tie, and jacket [if you're wearing one]. And my personal style is fairly understated, so I might look for my tie to have subtle details that stand out — whether that be through a small pop of color or a unique texture."

Larson says, "The great thing about bow ties is you can wear them with a suit or jeans and your favorite oxford." ■

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The Bow Tie Shoppe's offerings span a variety of styles, ready to fit any wedding theme.

WEDDING JEWELRY

By Shane Lueck

STYLE EVOLUTION: WEDDING JEWELRY





Photos above and below courtesy of George Sawyer

Timeless or trendy? Classic or unique? The questions that every couple faces when choosing their wedding bands are the same kinds of questions that designers must answer for themselves when they're creating the pieces.

Both George Sawyer and Rony Tennenbaum have been marketing their wedding jewelry to same-sex couples long before it was seen as acceptable for businesses to support marriage equality, but each man describes their work differently.

Just as each couple gravitates toward their own aesthetic, so too does each designer. Tennenbaum has been in the jewelry industry for almost 30 years and got his start manufacturing for the major retailers in the industry. Seven years ago, when he thought about creating his own jewelry, he already had all of the knowledge about sourcing jewels and everything that goes into making a high-quality product.

"The sad thing back then, when you would Google gay and jewelry, you would get only rainbows and triangles and these big gaudy pieces of jewelry," Tennenbaum says. "The jewelry you saw is what a straight man thinks a gay guy would want to wear. Why is that the only thing available? As a jeweler and someone who has the capability to design and create jewelry, I thought I could do a better job."

Sawyer, on the other hand, got started in jewelry in the '70s because he was interested in art and wanted to be a sculptor (despite majoring in the humanities while in college). "I discovered that jewelry is a sculpture on a small scale," he says. "I made rings for several same-sex couples, though no one called them wedding rings or bridal then. A lot of same sex couples didn't really talk about wearing wedding rings. it wasn't anywhere near as common as it is now."

While Sawyer didn't target same-sex couples in advertising or design, he did discover the community's interest in his work. Tennenbaum, however, made an effort to design rings for his community, which he felt other designers were ignoring.

"I really felt strongly about two things: creating jewelry for the sentimental wedding niche and that connection with people," Tennenbaum says. "I had been doing private jobs on the side and it is always a very intimate moment and I really wanted to continue that. I wanted my brand to bring that kind of happiness and personal connection with couples.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 50









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I love that part, that connection."

But that was then, at a time when the only outlet a couple had to find wedding bands was at a major retailer. Now the landscape is different from when the two men began their jewelry design careers. The community has changed, the world has changed, and the laws have changed. But both men have stuck to their image and what makes their brands unique.

Tennenbaum describes his work as fashion-forward with elements that are very sentimental (just take a look at his Tie the Knot collection). "I've evolved and my designs have evolved and the demand has evolved into more trendy and unique," he says. "They want things that aren't seen everywhere. I get inspired by a lot of things and fashion is one of those things."

Sawyer, who describes his design aesthetic as "fine art jewelry," takes a more artistic approach that has changed over time. "Most people are really familiar with what you see advertised in commercial stores, and they have a commercial look, and of course it's pretty generic," Sawyer says.

When he first started in metalworking, he developed an interest in Japanese metal work. "I developed a way to use those techniques in fine metals for jewelry. My work continues to evolve by being inspired by Japanese metal art and swords and then it gets to be self-fertilizing. When you start to do it, you get more and more ideas that you have to chase down."

One thing the designers can agree on: a couple's rings do not have to be perfect matches. In fact, they both enjoy the challenge of creating coordinating rings that have elements of the other while maintaining the individuality of each person in the couple.

As Tennenbaum says, "Maintain your individuality within your couplehood. Not every two people have the same taste in cars, furniture, or anything, so why shouldn't it be the same thing for jewelry?"

Another thing both men enjoy: customization. Each designer gets a thrill out of working with a couple to come up with a ring design that suits them. That one-on-one interaction fuels their creative juices and truly allows them to imbue their work with sentiment, emotion, and the dreams of each couple.

That's about where the similarities end.

Tennenbaum works almost exclusively in matte finishes, diamonds, and gold or platinum. He won't work with silver or other stones that he claims don't stand the test of time. Sawyer, on the other hand, loves to incorporate color into his work. "For me, color trumps karat," he says. "Color trumps everything because I work with colors. I like colored stones better than diamonds just because they have so much character. I like almost anything that's unusual."

But despite these differences, both designers are eager to see what the future holds for the world of same-sex wedding designs. Sawyer suggests looking beyond regular commercial stores and visiting designer sites (the American Jewelry Design Council is a good place to start). "It's a good place to see real high-quality designer jewelry. Just get beyond commercial retailers and take a look around and be pleasantly surprised," he advises.

With the advent of marriage equality nation-wide (thank you Supreme Court), the GLBT community finds itself growing into new wedding traditions. "We're going to find that what we grew up with as tradition is going to grow and expand and increase in diversity and variety because we are more diverse," Tennenbaum says. "Our niche also has people that have been together for decades and all of a sudden are allowed to be married. There will be many different scenarios in our community that will open up to us. As we grow into these things, we will see an evolution of the rings. Our generation will be about diversity; there won't be a norm." ■

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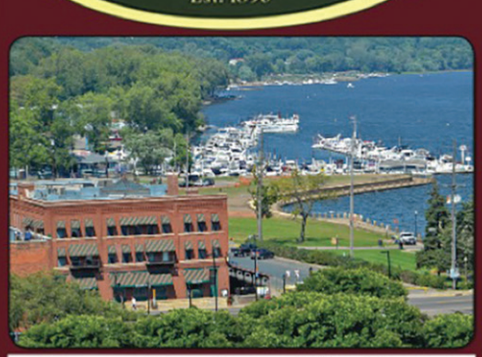
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By Shane Lueck • Photos by Studio Laguna

ADDING STYLE TO WEDDINGS WITH ENTICING ENTERTAINMENT





Enticing Entertainment's ballet dancers (left) and roaming table (right) offer some added style to your wedding.

"Ever since I was a little kid I always liked throwing a great party," Justen Pohl says. As the founder and director of Enticing Entertainment, Pohl certainly knows how to throw a party. Whether you're looking for aerialists, contortionists, or living statues, Pohl and his crew have you covered. And to think, it all started with a hula hoop.

"Years ago at a party I picked up a hula hoop and immediately I was hooked!" He says, "After consistent practice, I started getting asked to perform at events, meetings, and parties. I quickly found myself immersed in the local circus community and learning many different types of circus acts. After establishing myself as a performer, I started throwing events at a warehouse in the North Loop."

While throwing these events, he worked closely with countless art-

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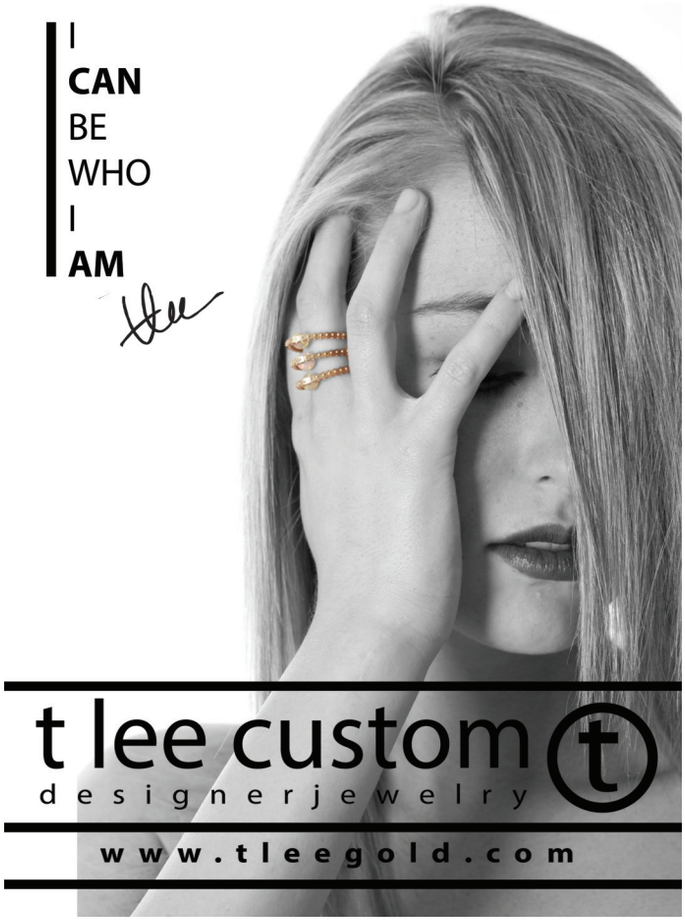
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The living red carpet gives guests the ultimate experience.

ists, performers, and builders to put together events that would give people an unforgettable, unique experience. It didn't take long for the word to spread about these events and soon people started contacting Pohl and his crew to perform at their events. Thus, Enticing Entertainment was born! From there, Pohl quit his real estate career to fully commit to growing his entertainment family. He started with about 10 performers, but now Enticing Entertainment has grown to over 120 performers and staff — and still growing!

Though Enticing Entertainment caters to corporate clients, they certainly shouldn't be overlooked to add some extra flair and style to your wedding. Corporate clients, like couples planning a wedding, are looking to create a spectacular event. But more importantly, both corporate event planners and couples planning a wedding are focusing on creating a one-of-a-kind experience for their guests.

"Enticing Entertainment is unique among entertainment companies," says Enticing's director of sales and marketing, James Starchild. "We aren't simply a booking agency; Enticing Entertainment is a full-scale production house. We work with an experienced team of performers, designers, and technicians to create experiences that are specific to you and your event."

So, what if that event is a wedding? Enticing Entertainment is polished, professional, and a perfect way to make any wedding standout. "Too often when people are looking to add entertainment to an event they get lost in a sea of options," Starchild says. "It's hard to tell good entertainment from bad and people end up booking something inconsistent and unreliable. With Enticing Entertainment we approach each event with a passion for perfection and work closely with our clients to make sure that, when the day arrives, every detail is on point."

Still not sure that the Enticing Entertainment flair is right for your wedding? Relax; it's for everyone! According to Starchild, the only thing the people who come to Enticing have in common is the desire to elevate their event in an exceptional way. "True, our acts are out of the ordinary," he says, "but that is what makes them — and every wedding or event that they perform at — an unforgettable experience. Each performance is as different as each individual who comes to us. What better way to celebrate a once in a lifetime event than with a once-in-a-lifetime performance?"

But Enticing Entertainment is so much more than a performance, they can also help add style to your wedding. The living red carpet, for example, is one of Enticing's custom-built acts. She stands about 10 feet high and features a red carpet extending from her to allow your guests the ultimate red carpet experience. Starchild notes that especially popular acts are live musicians and drag queens. More than that, Enticing Entertainment has worked to create environments for events and work with a team of lighting and sound designers, event designers, florists, and more.

Enticing Entertainment's team works closely with clients to develop entertainment programs to fit any theme, so don't worry about having to stretch your wedding theme to incorporate the performances. The talented team of artists and designers can custom design whatever you can dream up — in fact, Starchild calls it their specialty!

With that specialty comes a certain level of expectation: expect the exceptional. The unique and the unusual. Expect to be thrilled by theatrics and seduced by skill. But don't worry about being upstaged at your big event. "Any performer can tell you that being the center of attention is a lot of work," Starchild says. "While the focus should obviously be on the happy couple, most people find it to be a relief to have a moment to breathe at their event. Enticing Entertainment is the ideal way to entertain your guests because we know how to elevate an event without becoming a distraction."

Now comes the hard part: choosing which act to feature at your wedding. According to Starchild, acts that feature two performers are always a popular choice for weddings. He says double aerial acts, double body balancing acts, and dance acts featuring partnered couples are ideal choices for weddings because they allow the performers to incorporate the romance of the day into their performances.

With annual auditions held in the fall (keep your eye out for details, performers!), Enticing Entertainment is always upping the ante and rising to the next level. But don't let the mastery of Enticing Entertainment dictate your venue choice. "If you're looking to make a splash, look for venues with plenty of space, great acoustics, and fantastic lighting," Starchild says. "Most importantly, find some place that's you and makes you feel comfortable. We can work with almost any venue. So if your venue is 'you' we'll make sure everything else will fall into place!"

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Most of the people performing with Enticing Entertainment have been talent scouted or handpicked to train in their art. Others start at an even younger age in circus schools. "Our performers are inspired by the opportunity to express themselves in their own unique way," Pohl says. "Circus arts can make you cry, make you laugh, make you think, but they will never leave you bored. Performance arts are very demanding, there is always something to learn and limits to be pushed. All of our performers will tell you there is an undeniable rush when you finish a performance that makes all the hard work worthwhile."

Being a performer requires constant training. Pohl says his performers are always in the gym, taking yoga classes, and training in studios every day. Depending on what type of act they are working on, workout routines vary.

"Everybody has their strengths and weakness and we work together as a community to help each other get past the things that are hard for us individually," Pohl says. "Some may struggle with flexibility and others may struggle more with stamina. Through working and training together we are all able to become our personal best."

Getting in shape for a wedding doesn't have to be as intensive as a contortionist or aerialist's regimen, however.

There are many ways to get into shape for a wedding, so why not try something different and fun? Try a beginner's aerial class, or even a hula hoop class. "You would be surprised how fast you can burn calories, tighten and tone your body, and have fun at the same time!" Pohl says. "It's also a great thing to do with your friends; that way the whole wedding party will be looking their best."

Pohl recommends Stomping Ground Studio in downtown Minneapolis or Open Minds Fusion Studio in uptown as great places to look into. He says, "Both studios offer a wide array of fantastic ways to get fit and learn fun new skills."

Most people think you have to start at a young age. And it's true that many performers start when they are young. But Pohl says it's never too late to discover your inner performer. "We work with performers of all ages that do all different types of acts," he says. "Being a performer is all about passion and dedication — those don't have an age limit."

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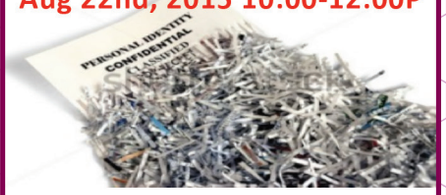


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LEATHER LIFE | BY STEVE LENIUS

"A Taste of Kink" for Sexual Health Professionals

"A Taste of Kink", an evening of interactive kink demonstrations and discussions, recently allowed over 100 sexual health professionals from across the country to see, and perhaps experience firsthand, the dynamics and feelings associated with kink and BDSM practices.

The evening was part of the 47th annual conference of the American Association of Sexuality Educators, Counselors and Therapists (AASECT). The conference, held June 3–7 in Minneapolis, featured over 50 workshops providing continuing education credits for sexual health professionals.

Workshop topics at the conference included GLBTQ youth, transgender health issues, gender roles, working with non-monogamous couples, and sex-positive Christianity. The conference also included a performance by Wicked Wenches Cabaret, a Twin Cities burlesque troupe.

The "Taste of Kink" event on Saturday, June 6, was co-produced by AASECT's AltSex SIG (Special Interest Group) and the National Coalition for Sexual Freedom (NCSF), with help from Twin Cities volunteers and groups including MSDB, Knights of Leather, MinKY (Minnesota Kinky Youth), and The Electrical Group. The event took place at Patrick's Cabaret in Minneapolis.

The purpose of the evening was to explain the dynamics of kink and BDSM scenes, and to show non-kinky professionals how kink feels. One of the organizers explained, "We are doing this to become more professionally and culturally sensitive to the needs of the BDSM community." Another organizer commented, "As therapists we need to be prepared to deal with this, especially with *50 Shades of Gray* out there."

The event started with a one-hour "munch" — food, nonalcoholic beverages and conversation. Local community volunteers and demonstrators wore "Ask me about . . ." name tags listing their kink interests and inviting questions from AASECT conference attendees.

After the munch, the demonstrations began. Six demo areas offered concurrent demonstrations of flogging, whipping, and impact play; foot worship; punching; spanking; sensation play; bondage and suspension; and electrical play with a violet wand.

The demonstrations showed not just technique, but also the processes of negotiation, consent and aftercare (checking in with a partner afterward to make sure everyone is okay). Demonstrators also talked about what they felt as they were involved in the activity, why they liked to do the activity they were demonstrating, and what appealed to them about it.

AASECT members then had the opportunity to try, or "taste," the practices being demonstrated if they wished, and many of them did. Their tastes gave them firsthand experience not only with one or more BDSM practices, but also with the processes of negotiation, consent and aftercare — and with the use of safewords. As someone commented, "This isn't just PowerPoints or slideshows; this is experiential learning."

For your humble columnist, a nonprofessional spectator, the evening was a series of amazing moments. It was interesting to see the slightly startled expression on someone's face as they felt the electric charge of a violet wand for the first time, or the blissful expression on someone else's face as they were having their feet worshipped.

When the flogging demonstrator asked if anyone wanted to feel the tails of the flogger, almost everyone watching wanted to. That enthusiasm progressed to a continuous line of audience members at the flogging station, wanting to see what being flogged felt like. "I can't believe I'm doing this," said one audience member when it was their turn. When I asked another audience member for three words to describe the experience of being flogged, the response was "mellow, soothing, and relaxing."

Audience enthusiasm was just as evident at the other demonstration stations. A female attendee who had just experienced a singletail whip described the experience as "exhilarating, intense, and exciting." Asked what she thought of the entire evening, she said, "I'm intrigued to bring it home now."

There were enthusiastic comments from other AASECT members as well. One said of the evening, "I'm really grateful; I've watched people have transformative experiences. This evening has let me receive in a way I haven't been able to in years."

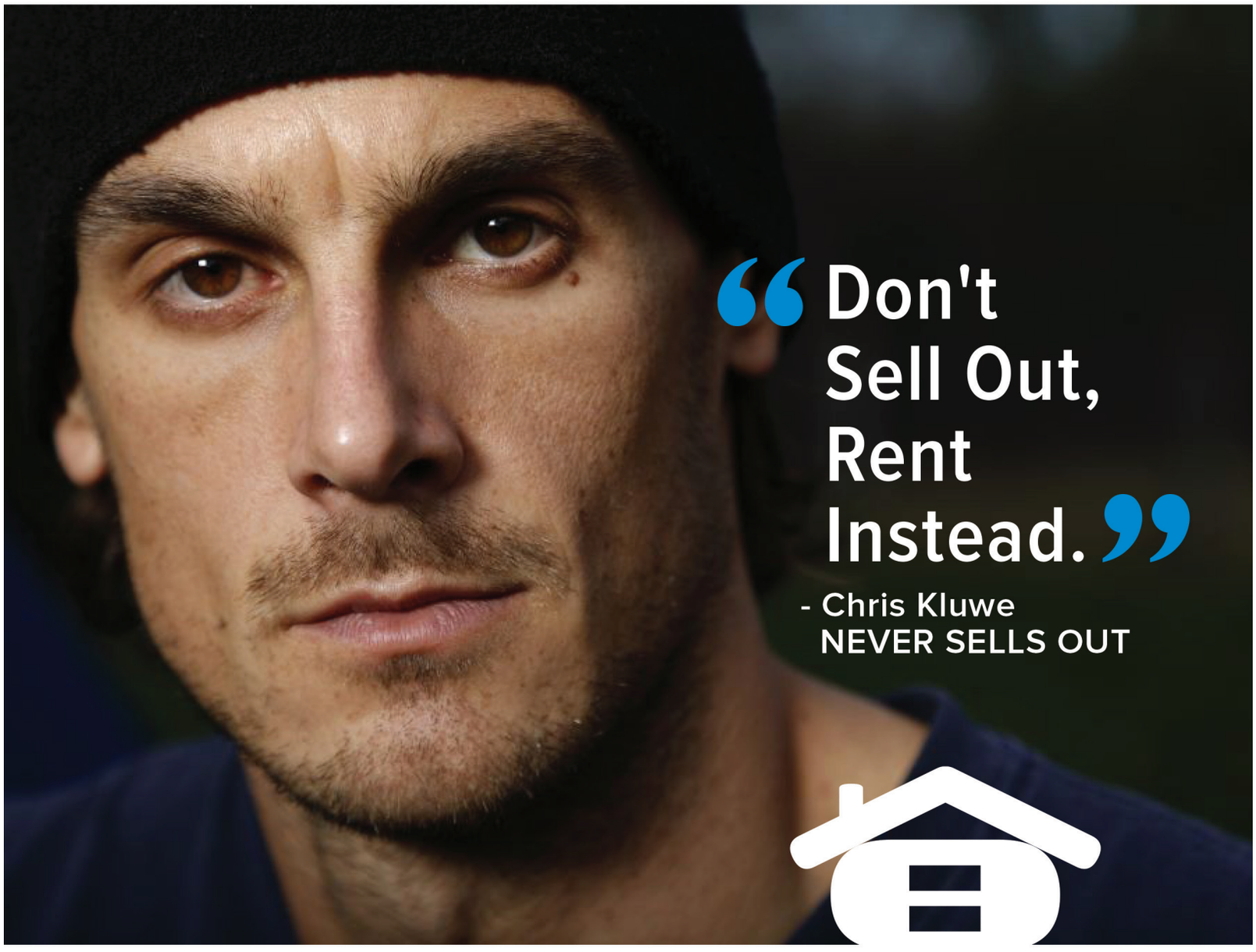
Another audience member liked "having people expand boundaries and experience touch in a new way, in a safe and consensual manner," and still another was "surprised to be able to ask for what I want." A member of AASECT's AltSex SIG, one of the evening's cosponsors, was happy that the evening was going so well: "I am so psyched that this is actually happening!"

Everyone enthusiastically agreed that the evening had gone very well, and that the experience was transformative for some attendees, and even cathartic. One AASECT board member was pleased: "This evening has given us all a lot of insight." While attendees might not have been into kink themselves, they now had a better understanding of the dynamics and feelings associated with kink, which will allow them to better serve clients who are into kink and other alternative sexualities.

And Susan Wright, one of the founders of event cosponsor NCSF, made a prediction: "I think this is going to be talked about for years." ■

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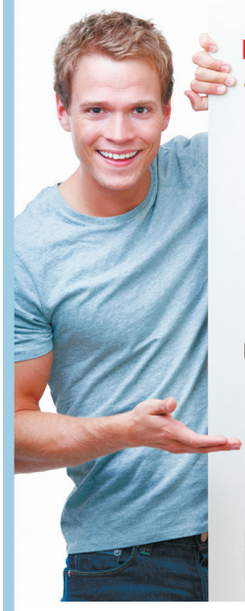
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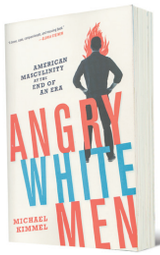
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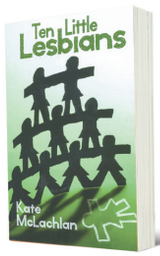
Rubyfruit Jungle came out in 1973, a bit more than 40 years ago, and has been rereleased in its first trade paperback edition. Brown's introduction is edifying: "This novel is pegged as a lesbian novel, therefore classified in the ghettos of literature. Anytime any work or any person is qualified, it's always an insult." Her protagonist, indomitable Molly Bolt, needs no qualifications. This coming of age novel is about a lesbian, but *Rubyfruit* can be read with profit by any sex or gender along the spectrum. Molly fights her way out of country poverty into New York penury, but rides the waves. Like Paris, her motto could be, "Fluctuat nec mergitur." (Wave-tossed, but does not sink.) If you didn't read it then, read it now.

Angry White Men: Masculinity at the End of an Era
Michael Kimmel
Nation Books
$16.99



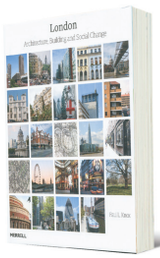
Sociologist Kimmel has written extensively on males, *Guyland* and *The Gendered Society* among his works, and here he tackles those angry American white males who see their power and historical privilege slipping through their fingers. What Kimmel calls "aggrieved entitlement" motivates those males joining Rush Limbaugh, railing against immigrants, women taking "their" jobs, usurping "their" prerogatives. They are by no means uneducated or lower class, but were raised to expect what Kimmel calls "unparalleled social privilege" and feel that what was rightly theirs has been virtually stolen. Kimmel sees a solution in deconstructing this false sense of entitlement by replacing it with the entitlement due to all citizens; the right to work, to have a fair wage, and the hope of bettering oneself and one's family.

Ten Little Lesbians
Kat McLachlan
Quest Books
$14.95



With a nod to Agatha Christie, McLachlan has brought her victims to the lesbian-owned Adelheid Inn, isolated in the Cascade Mountains. It's immediately clear that none are what they seem to be. One's not acknowledging she's lesbian, weekending with a lady; two are "just" vacationing Mormon girls, one's a preternaturally able blind woman. Judge Beatrice, devastated by her long-term partner's death, accompanies her angry niece, keeping her on a tight rein. Add the sudden appearance of Beatrice's old friend, and the slightly off-kilter hotel manager and the establishment's mysterious owner. We might never have sorted it out if the whole lot hadn't been isolated from the outside world by a tremendous mudslide and members of the group began to die. An eerie, nicely plotted countdown.

London: Architecture, Building and Social Change
Paul L. Knox
Merrell
$50



Knox's text and illustrations are extensive yet navigable, as he reveals London's landscape as a palimpsest, the old — evident in traces — overwritten by the new, to form the rich, sprawling landscape of today's city. London formed from a conglomeration of districts, of which Knox uses 27 to illustrate the varied architecture and social range inherent in each area and bring alive the city's "internal geography". Belgravia to Bethnal Green, Kensington to Spitalfields, display both the wealthy and working class. Knox's introduction gives a clear overview of his plan, and each chapter has a district map, a red block on the main London map, with featured buildings described and numbered on the map; "breadcrumbs," as it were, marking the reader's path clearly to explore and enjoy. ■

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RIDE REVIEW | BY RANDY STERN | PHOTOS BY RANDY STERN

2015 Ford Mustang



For 51 years, there has been one vehicle that defines America.

It was not by accident. The formula was ripe for the marketplace: a small car with a sporty stance, seating four (at least) with a name that fits its intended use. The result was the biggest launch for a single vehicle of its time. It captured the imagination of young buyers looking for something of its kind. They wanted instant freedom, even in the face of changing attitudes about this country.

The Ford Mustang was what America needed in 1964. It was a constant in our history, even when things weren't what they were supposed to be. Certainly, the Mustang had its ups and downs over the years, but a world without one is simply unimaginable.

In late 2013, Ford unveiled the latest Mustang. It was to be a global car for the first time in its history. The Mustang that you would buy here in the Twin Cities was to be designed to be one you could buy in London, Moscow, Cape Town, Sydney, Mumbai, Beijing, Buenos Aires, and so forth. Yet, it had to maintain a certain air about itself without detracting from the car's own principles. That was a monumental task for Ford, but completely achievable.

As much as the Mustang is part of the automotive lexicon of this country, it had an impression upon my own life. My first Mustang was a 1974 Ghia hardtop coupe (known as the Mustang II) in a lime green color with an avocado vinyl roof. It began as my brother's car until it became mine for a couple of years in the mid-1980s. It was OK, just OK. The last Mustang I drove belongs to a former friend of mine in northern California. It was a 1968 hardtop with a 289-cubic-inch V8. That was one of the best cars I have ever driven in my life. The last time I saw it was in 1990. It would be the last Mustang I would ever drive.

Until now. I had the privilege of getting reacquainted with the Pony for the first time in 25 years. This 2015 convertible with the new EcoBoost engine came just in time for summer.

It had a sunny disposition about its bad self; it came in triple yellow tricoat with a black roof and ebony interior. That shade of yellow would brighten anyone's day.

Considering that today's automotive consumers are settling into crossovers and are looking upmarket for driving satisfaction, is the Ford Mustang still the symbol of American automotive desire?

This newest Mustang offers a combination of classic design elements with modern twists. Looking at the pony badge up front in a grille, it immediately sends a reminder of what this car is all about. Every line, crease, bulge and angle is folded into a shape that continues to pay homage to the Mustangs of the past, even with some very modern details. The rear end, for example, offers the three upright lenses that have been a part of this car since 1964.

The silhouette for both the coupe and convertible are handsomely modern. The soft top on this tester folds down rather quick, after a release of the handle on the inside and a push on the button. Two plastic tonneau caps tuck in to lock down the roof and create more airflow through the car. With the roof down, the Mustang offers a classic look that cannot be ignored.

The interior carries the same theme as exterior: the fusion of classic and modern elements. One could find some parts of the dashboard dating back to 1967; it is very functional and quite handsome to look at. The instrument cluster has two huge dials that are readable, along with backlighting that can be changed to a selection of colors you choose. If you want purple instrumentation at night, that can be changed on the center TFT multifunction screen in-between the gauges. That screen has many options for readouts, including car performance stats, fuel and trip information, and settings for almost every vehicle function.

The MyFord Touch screen dominates the center stack, but it is located below eye level for tall drivers. It is easily accessible, though, as with the climate control functions. Below the climate control switches are four chromed toggle buttons. They are indeed a throwback utilizing very modern functions, such as hazard lights and the drive mode selector. The thick-rimmed steering wheel has a plethora of buttons that are logical to control the MyFord Touch/SYNC, cruise control, and information screen functions. In all, the switchgear is of good quality, as expected from a Ford product.

The EcoBoost Premium model offers two very supportive and comfortable leather seats. Power seat adjustments help to find a great driving position, while making one very comfortable behind the wheel. Rear seat room is obtainable, if everyone is of average size. Trunk space is sizable, though measuring out to 11.4 cubic feet. That should be enough room for luggage for two on a weekend road trip.

For audio entertainment, a Shaker sound system was installed in this convertible. This setup includes 12 speakers, one being a subwoofer in the trunk, an amplifier, and the ability to use SYNC to playback music files and streaming radio from your mobile apps via a Bluetooth or USB connection. SiriusXM and HD Radio are also part of the MyFord Touch/SYNC package.

Underneath the hood is something quite special. It is a 310-horsepower 2.3-liter EcoBoost turbocharged four-cylinder engine and it is sensational! The throttle response is good and there is no turbo lag at all. This convertible had the six-speed automatic transmission, which is also quick on the shifts. Those shifts are even quicker when you put the drive mode into Sport+ or Track. In Sport+, the revs run freer, but you get the full capability of the drivetrain to make quick work of the curvy roads and lonely country two-lane highways.

In this new Mustang, there was one development that has made many fans (and non-fans) celebrate with extreme joy: the introduction of independent rear suspension. It was a long time coming after five decades of solid live axles in the rear. Finally, this is a Mustang worth celebrating. You celebrate it by taking a corner and letting the rear end swallow it up, instead of resisting it. Therefore, the Mustang tracks very nicely anywhere you point it. However, if you are not used to upright long hoods in front of you, a little reacquainting with judging things in front of you will have to do to truly get a grip on this wonderful car.

The ride is compliant in Normal drive mode. Sport+ firms up the suspension, though it balances ride quality with tauter cornering. Put the Mustang in Track mode and the Traction Control is shut off. Steering feel is weighted in Sport+, but turning action is sharper. In Normal, turning effort and on-center feel is pretty good. Braking is also very good with solid stops in both normal and panic situations.

Ford has been talking about increased fuel economy with the EcoBoost engine lineup overall, in comparison to naturally aspirated basic engines. In this EcoBoosted Mustang convertible, I achieved an average of 24.3 MPG. Not bad for a 3,701-pound drop-top car!

The Mustang lineup starts at $23,800 for a V6-powered fastback with a manual transmission. Convertibles start at $29,300 with the same driveline. This EcoBoost Premium convertible tester came with a sticker price of $41,790. If you must have the power of a V8 in your pony, the Mustang GT is it. These powerful horses start at $32,300 for the fastback. To get a GT Premium convertible with the same equipment as this EcoBoost, the sticker will jump up to $48,865.

The Ford Mustang is part of the iconography that has been a part of the American scene for the past 51 years. It has gone through its highs and lows during its lifespan, and continues to be a constant in the Ford lineup since 1964. Today's pony is one sweet ride, designed for the world with a nod to the American audience. The feeling of driving an American icon that is well behaved and packing balanced performance is something one should experience in their lifetime.

A quarter century has gone by in-between Mustangs. When I say "it was worth the wait" you'd better believe that this 2015 EcoBoost convertible left a huge impression upon my soul. This is perhaps the best driving Mustang ever engineered. It certainly was one of the most enjoyable cars I had the privilege of reviewing for this magazine. ■







SKIRTING THE ISSUES | BY ELLEN KRUG

Reunion Summer

It's been a reunion summer with a big high school 40th and a much smaller get-together with long-lost college friends.

Since everyone I'd see had only known me as a teenage boy or young twentysomething man, accompanying me to each reunion were old travel companions I knew all too well: Anxiety, Nervousness, and a particularly unlikable character named Dread. Complicating things was that I graduated from high school and college in Cedar Rapids, a conservative city in Red State Iowa. All of this was enough to get my heart beating racehorse-fast every time I heard or read the word "reunion."

Would I be accepted? How many times would I need to explain transitioning genders? Will I hear the "God doesn't make mistakes" speech?

Even worse — what I fretted about more than anything else — how would I compare to the other women in the class? Will my weight show more than theirs? How will I stack up in the face wrinkle or no-longer-perfect-teeth categories?

Simply put, I feared not being pretty enough.

Our mini-Coe College reunion consisted of just four of us, two other women and one man, reconnecting at a coffee shop in Minneapolis. Since my college years can be measured by the thousands of hours I spent studying in the Coe library, the other three folks were far closer to each other than they were to me. Still, that I was now a woman instead of a dude made no difference at all; that one fact helped to make it a delightful hour-and-a-half of catching up with the promise of connecting again way more frequently.

The high school reunion was a two-night/one-day affair where I also found acceptance and even a small bit of notoriety. Many had read my memoir and understood in advance that the Krug they'd be seeing in 2015 wasn't at all like the Krug they knew in 1975. I heard "Ellie" and "she" with far greater ease and much more sincerity than I could have hoped. People seemed to sincerely care about the female me way more than they had ever cared about the male me.

Red State or not, the experience was wonderful. Whew!

The only hiccup during the entire high school reunion weekend came when I showed up to dinner quite under-dressed in jeans and a V-neck tee. I had made the mistake of asking one of the organizers (my dear best friend Thap whom I've written of before) about the dinner dress code. He nonchalantly answered, "It'll be very casual; you don't need to dress up."

I walked into a dining room filled with women wearing dresses and jewelry and men in sport coats. Panic set in. Ten minutes later, I was back in my hotel room doing a quick switch into a sundress and fashionable sandals.

Note to file: never ever under any circumstance listen to a straight man about the dress code for anything. Always, he'll have absolutely no clue.

I've added that to the long list of lessons they forgot to teach in Living in Your True Gender 101. The pinnacle of the high school reunion came late on the second night in the middle of a long Karaoke stream. It was a slow song, something from the '70s which I didn't recall, and quite a few women were on the dance floor with husbands or boyfriends or that former football player they wished they had dated.

For a moment, I felt terribly alone, the last woman standing. I turned and saw Kevin, who had been one of the gang (there were seven or eight of us guys who partied and hung out) back in the day.

I was the one who asked. "Will you dance with me?" Without an iota of hesitation, Kevin answered, "Sure."

For the next five minutes, we occupied space on a worn wooden dance floor moving slow and wrapped close. It was an unexpected personal reunion with an old pal whom I'm quite sure, like me, couldn't have imagined such a scenario. Yet, Kevin was a good sport and never flinched a bit.

He was a pretty good dancer, too.

It was an incredible act of generosity that I will remember for the rest of my life.

Thank you, Kevin. You are a sweetheart!

Transitioning genders in midlife, something I call "gender correcting," isn't easy. We trans people have to start over in all kinds of ways, which includes risking rejection by those who knew us in a different gender at a different time. Even more, not everyone is as lucky as Ellie Krug; sadly, others who come out as their "true" selves can never go home. For trans people in far too many places in this country and world, the consequences of attending a high school class reunion could be life-threatening.

Happily, I now have two new travel companions, Compassion and Kindness, who seem to show up more and more as I go forward in my new life, the one where I get to be me, the real me.

Consequently, my old travel companions can take a hike.

Permanently. ■

Ellen (Ellie) Krug is a public speaker and the author of Getting to Ellen: A Memoir about Love, Honesty and Gender Change. *She welcomes your comments at ellenkrugwriter@gmail.com.*

LAVENDER'S OUT IN THE STANDS WITH THE ST. PAUL SAINTS

JULY 24, 2015


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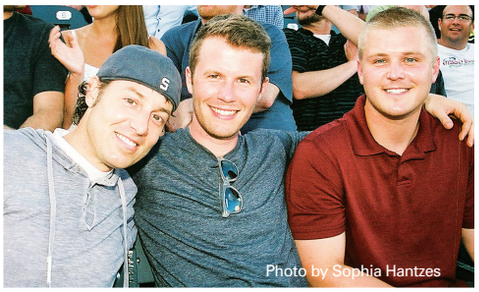

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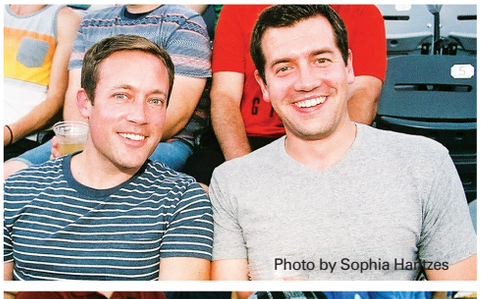

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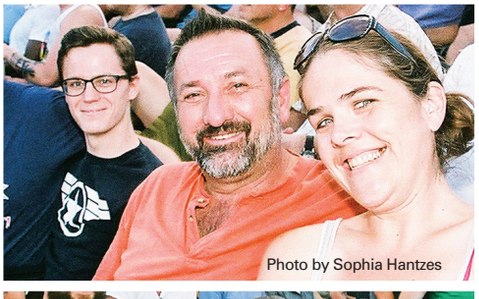
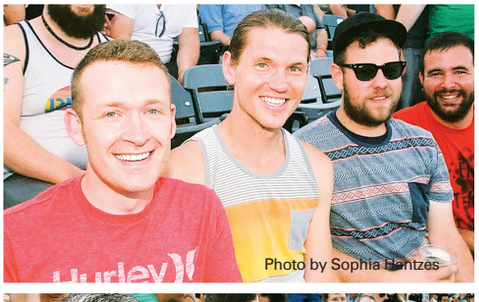
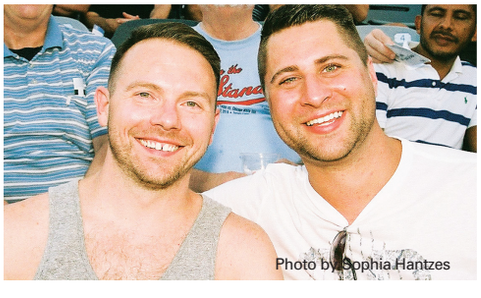

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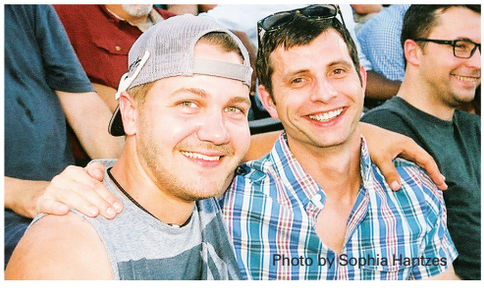

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DATELAND | BY JENNIFER PARELLO

Marriage By Dolphin

Let's take a quiz! Answer questions based on the following situation:

25 years ago you met the love of your life. You were 25 and she was 24. You both were very young and very scared. So it ended before it even really began, and you lost contact for most of your adulthood. Yet, you never forgot her, and you bet against all odds that you'd be reunited someday.

Now, fast-forward to a late night in 2015. It's the 25th anniversary of your first kiss. The fact that you remember this date makes you either a) really romantic or b) kind of pathetic. Doesn't really matter. What's important is that you have one too many beers, pick up your iPad, and look her up on Facebook. And because you don't know how to use your iPad, you accidentally hit the "friend" request. You don't realize you've done this until the next morning, when you find a response from her in your inbox.

You write to each other for the next couple months and nervously/excitedly agree to meet for dinner. The dinner goes really well! You simply can't believe your good fortune! After a quarter of a century your most important dream seems about to come true.

Now! Let's take a quiz to see how well you handle this blessing.

1. After dinner, you linger outside the restaurant, both of you reluctant to end the evening. Suddenly, she leans in to kiss you. (Note: you have dreamt of/prayed for this kiss for 25 years! It's a big deal.) How do you respond? a) You kiss her back and hope your brain doesn't explode from the excitement. b) You push her away and explain that you have a cold sore. When she asks, "Am I going to get it?" You say, "Yes, probably. Sorry."

If you chose "b," well, then you're as much of a moron as I am. Because, yes, that is exactly what I did when she kissed me. Now, in my defense, I really did have a cold sore. But I had waited 25 years for that kiss! Nothing short of the Black Plague should have stopped it. I'm such a frickin' idiot!

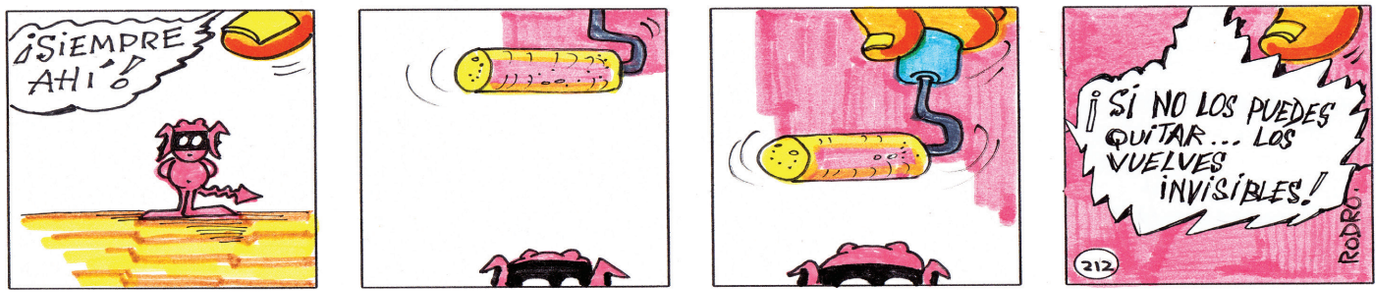
2. Undeterred by the fact that you are a complete imbecile, she invites you to her home. Because she is a nice girl, she carefully couches the invitation in concern. "You've got a long drive," she says. "You should spend the night." How do you respond? a) You immediately begin shucking off your clothing as you follow her to her car. b) You say, "Oh, it's not that long of a drive. I'll be fine." And when she restates the invitation — this time suggesting that she has something more sexy in mind than your personal safety — you giggle madly at the thought, and then respond, "Really, it's not that long of a drive. But thanks!"

Needless to say my answer was "b", because I'm a nitwit. For literally half of my life I've waited for that invitation, and when it finally came, I didn't accept it. I wish this were an interactive column so that one of my readers could reach through it and slap some sense into me.

It's now a couple months after this first dinner and my stupidity continues! Last night I told her that I'd like to get married by a dolphin — to actually have a dolphin perform the ceremony because I could never break a vow made in front of a dolphin.

She stared quietly at me for a moment. I'm certain she was wondering how she had gotten herself involved in this madness and whether it was too late to escape. But instead of running away, she simply shook her head and stated emphatically, "No! We're not getting married by a dolphin." ■

TROLÍN, UN DIABLITO ROSA POR RODRO



Still here!
Toujours ici!

If you can't get them to leave, turn them invisible!
Si vous ne pouvez les faire partir, rendez-les invisibles!

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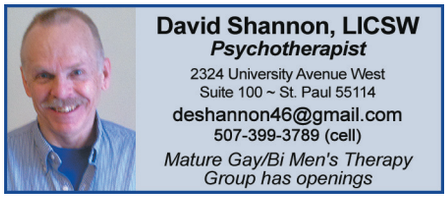
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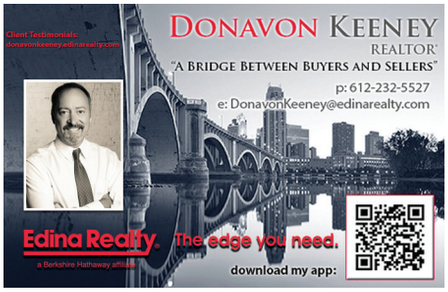




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THROUGH THESE EYES | BY JUSTIN JONES

Salting Wounds into Demons

No one could see him but me.

I was six years old when he chased me. The goblin was a tall, disgusting, angry thing: taller than my father, more pungent than a sock, with gnarly teeth and thick, heavy thighs. He'd demand I lie down and please him, then take me behind the sofa, pin me to the floor, and laugh at my crying.

I liked what he did. I *wanted* him to hurt me, to scare me, to tell me awful things, and bend me to his will.

My mother caught me a few times behind the couch, struggling under him, and she'd respond with concern. "I'm only playing Army," I'd lie. "Play something else," she'd say. But why?

Why was it wrong for *me* to have an invisible goblin when she had her own, real ones? Four or five of them. Her boyfriends. The horror they inflicted dwarfed the worst mine dealt. They broke dishes, punched holes in walls, told my mother they'd kill her. I was in some ways jealous. My goblin was banal next to my mother's boyfriends. I wanted one of hers. I wanted one of her men to do to me what they did to her.

I wanted to be my mother, gorgeous and charming, an enchanter of men, a seductress who'd twist sour hearts around her finger, break them to show them that she could, and walk away without a second thought. "Weak," she called the nice ones. She tired of the others.

Until Gene.

Gene was once my favorite of my mother's monsters: a tall, thick man with an affected, booming voice and a sick-twisted manner both domineering and soft-hearted. He'd buy me toys and slap my back so hard it hurt ("patting," he called it).

I took particular interest in Gene for our alone time together. Gene exercised his privilege as a used car salesman by bringing home different autos from work. He'd drive me around the neighborhood in them, impressing me in sleek sports cars, taking corners too fast, slamming on the breaks in the middle of streets, telling me we were going to crash, and occasionally grabbing my knee so hard I felt it shift under my skin ("I'm just tickling you," he'd say when I'd cry out).

I enjoyed it.

But Gene was more disturbing than my mother's other boyfriends. Something about him was deeply insidious. Just out of sight during even Gene's most frightening outbursts lurked something more, something darker, more than a monster. It revealed itself only once, on the night of his death.

Gene put a gun to his head in the summer of 1992. He sat at the edge of my mother's bed after an argument, eerily, too-immediately calm, looked into my eyes, and made me bear witness to the blooming of a goblin into a demon. He took a piece of my mother with him that night. She blamed herself the rest of her life for my being there. She became a different person and died a near-empty shell.

I stopped fantasizing about my goblin after Gene. I like to think it died with him. But my own sordid history with men gives me pause. Might his death been to my personal monster what I'd seen bloom from his own — an evolution into a slyer, more sinister creature, one with no need for imagination as sustenance — a treacherous addiction to men who'd do more than do me wrong, the men I grow increasingly attracted to. As I age, I see more of my mother in myself.

I imagine we all have goblins hunting us, wicked thoughts, feelings, events, people, we can't stand but wish secretly never to stop, because the goblins after us are us after our own vulnerabilities, not terribly unhealthy for most people, but ripe for others to danger salting wounds into demons. ■

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